WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO GIVE?

ANGELO
PATRI

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO GIVE?

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WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO GIVE?

By ANGELO PATRI

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WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO GIVE?

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO GIVE?

WHAT have you, you busy one, struggling so hard for your share of goods and content? What have you to offer? That is what counts most to the rest of us struggling along beside you. What gift will your left hand bestow while your right hand receives? Have you even a day on your porch to offer? Or a friendly smile? Have you a gracious word for the absent one? Can you offer a bit of beauty, whether of sense or spirit?

Search well in your pouch, for you must buy what you want in the world's market-place with coin minted of your own self. Men will have no other. But how quick they are to grasp at the real thing. How eager they are to gather in the least, last coin of it.

There's an old professor who has a little house close to the state road. The engineers cut down the gentle green bank that edged his garden leaving it red and raw, and the water worked its will when spring released the snows among the hills. The wash clogged the roadside ditch and the road-menders came with shovels and scooped it out and tossed the unsightly mess on the torn bank.

All summer the professor worked on the bank, smoothing and grading and taking out the stones. He carried barrowful after barrowful of a dainty green vine that in spring would be hung with twin bells of a delicate pinkness and ethereal sweetness. He made ferns nestle against the stone wall and placed vines where they could straggle toward friendly tree trunks. Plump in the middle of the ditch he planted orange lilies and called his job complete.

Jack o' the Pines watched him with derision mixed with pity. "When the road-menders come they will dig out the ditch again and throw the mess on your posies. What'd you go

and plant things in the way for? A-wasting your time and strength at your time o' day."

When the road-men came the bank was abloom and the orange lilies stood majestically offering their chalices of beauty to all who passed that way. The professor leaned on his hoe to watch, and Jack o' the Pines peered anxiously round the bend.

"'Pears your bank's a-holdin' good," called the foreman. "'Pears if your posies did the trick. Look good, now, don't they? Makes folks cheerful they do, certain. S'posin' we lay a bit o' pipe from the foot o' your hill yonder? Save some o' the wash and give the posies a better chance?"

It is always that way. Offer the best you have and the other fellow will give you the best he has. But the best you have means the product of your heart and mind and hands. The best you have is always made out of a part of your very own self, the magic self that keeps on growing the more you keep on giving it away.

That which is yours by dint of cold money has

little value in the market of men. Only that product which bears your tool marks finds a real welcome. The idea that bears the marks of bitter struggle, of hunger and thirst and aching throat and sweating brain, finds a ready home. It bears your mark and carries the best of you to the heart of your neighbour and that, when all is said and done, is exactly what we are here for.

What have you got—to give?

BUTTERFLIES

I LIKE butterflies, the gayer the better. With the first sunny day they come riding into the garden all dressed as for holiday in velvet and silk spun from some fairy loom and blazed with a colour no human eye could have visioned, no human touch set in place. Mounted on wings of dazzling sheen, so frail a least whisper of air sets them aquiver, they dip and soar, scarce flecking the waiting flowers as they pass. Life holds no care for them. With a whole glad day to spend, nectar to sip, and love to fulfill, why trouble about a grim old person with a scythe and an hourglass?

Of course, there are thousands of flowers to visit, and the day is but a day, but why make a toil of a pleasure? There is always the grace of the flower, her perfume and hospitality waiting, and then the lilt of a wandering breeze to swing

one aloft on a slanting sunbeam where a daring lover waits. Danger lurks; sharp beaks may dart out of a clear blue sky; swift storm may turn the garden into an angry tossing sea; but why make a grief out of a high-hearted adventure? Like a gay cavalier the brave butterfly enters the field and with the careless grace of the finished artist performs her task and goes on her merry way.

A gallant adventurer, a vision of beauty, a rainbow of promise spanning the garden ere the sleep of winter rob it of all semblance of the life pulsing beneath it, my gay butterfly lives her day, provides for the beauty of the morrow, and is gone, leaving no shadow behind her. Others there are who live in the garden and manfully do their part, but with such a difference. Always they take toll of the garden and who takes toll without leaving a grudging?

The green jade snake glides over the stones and keeps down the burrowing marauders, but he frightens the children and the birds, and my heart is not with him. Toads squat under the

shade of the bittersweet and gulp down the foraging insects, but they are as ugly as wise, and they chill me. The birds come and make the place lovely with singing, but they gobble the seeds and the seedlings and pilfer the berries. John comes with the barrow and spade and pulls out the weeds and lifts the stones and sets out the plants with touching care, but, oh, the babies he tramples and the blooms he shatters. He and his spade and his barrow are for ever leaving scars where they render service.

Why should that be, I wonder? Need the work of men's hands always leave scars on the fair face of nature? Meadows once lovely with flowers are hideous under their loads of ashes and débris. Streams once silver, reflecting the blue of the sky, now run sadly, dun coloured, clogged with the ill-smelling waste of the factories. Hills once clothed with forests from their tops to their toes now stand starkly bare and unlovely without a bough to shelter the bird or a burrow for a bunny. All because we would serve our day in the garden.

He who takes toll leaves a grudging, while he who works out his day in the spirit of beauty, drinking his nectar and winging his flight toward the sky, leaves no shadow behind him, but passes as a rainbow of promise, a harbinger of flowers in springtime. One does like butterflies.

ONE

THIS is the day of big numbers. We count our war debt by millions, our fortunes by millions. We measure our flights by thousands of miles, and we discover huge stars staggering distances away in space. We count our majorities on adding machines and smile as we see the figures trail across the page. The higher the count the greater the triumph. There's safety in numbers. They conquer the fear of loneliness—for a time.

Each of us knows and dreads loneliness. Born within us is the haunting knowledge that by one and one we must take our way through this world, and the shadowy finger points to a narrow path, close hedged. Avidly we reach out and gather to ourselves all and everything that may bear us company on the way. Frantically, we count aloud—at the top of our voices—

in the hope that we can, somehow, merge ourselves with the great total of people and things and happenings. Yet always we hear the click of the turnstile—one, and one, and one. Friends fall back at the turn of the road; hope flies beyond our horizon; fortune turns her back. We stand counting one, just one.

And well for us it is so. After all, one is the biggest, proudest number of them all. One man standing alone crying, "Follow me, leave me, as you please. I will still count my one," is far, far better befriended than he who travels with the host crying, "Crucify him." By the strange paradox of life he who goes alone is not lonely, for isolation holds no terrors for him; rather it presents a challenge that lifts his heart high, plants his feet on unshakable foundations and turns his face toward the light.

There is a thrill of pure pride and a prancing joy in the thought that only one can be first, only one can carry the flag, only one can claim the reward. Sorrow may be his portion and bitterness may lie in his cup, but he will scarce taste

them. The song in his triumphant spirit will soar high above all sense of hurt. Fighting his battle, speeding his cause, counting his one out loud, he wins.

"Ah, what's the use? I can see the thing's all wrong, but what good would it do for me to speak? I'm only one. What's the use?" That's the most mistaken notion in the world. Of course you're only one, man. The ONE. There was none made like you, none can do your job or take your place. If your foot slips, the scar will lie on the fair face of things; if you go down, there will be a hole in the trail. But if you steady your step and keep on there will be a shining mark far out on the frontier, and in days to come there will follow those who will bless your name. Count one and your dread will fall away like a worn-out coat.

Call over the roll of those who made their life count proudly and led the world. It is not the host that counts so much in the scrimmage. It is just you. One, the biggest number a man can count.

THE CLOSED DOOR

THOSE that Life marks for her very own must, as they grow to full stature, suffer her training through a grilling apprenticeship while the middlings and the wee fellows go scot-free. So take comfort to yourself if, when you have settled down snugly in a pleasant nest, contented with your gatherings and your gains, she suddenly swoops down upon you and hurls you and your possessions out into a cold unheeding world, slamming the door hard behind your heels.

"There, my boy," says she composedly dusting off her hands, "you had finished that bit and didn't know enough to go ahead with the next; so I gave you a lift. Come along, now. Sharp's the word and quick's the action. See you again at the turn of the road."

Better scramble right up and steady your legs

for the going. Three days are allowed the children of men for the resurrection of their souls, but if you should be able to roll away the stone a few hours ahead of time you will find the angel waiting to point the way and even go along with you for a bit. Nothing so dreadful as you imagine has happened to you. You have completed a stage of your growth and are ready to start on the next. You have been born again and it hurts a bit; but why whimper? Begin living again.

Comb the wreckage for some bits of precious experience and carry them along to lend colour and strength and the fine seasoning of a chastened soul to whatever is coming to you. Get up and start, even though you are not sure of your destination. Nobody is sure. Whistle a tune to screw up your courage and, whatever else you do, do not look behind you. If you do you will take on a load of salt, bitter and heavy to carry.

It is wonderful how soon signs of promise begin to show along the way. A little ripple of

hope thrills your heart, which lifts with fresh courage; difficulties are smoothed down by a new-found strength and a finer intelligence; light breaks through the thinning clouds, and once again you see the city of your dreams beckoning you from the transcendent heights.

It is the same vision you thought lost for ever that day the door slammed behind you, only grown far lovelier. There is a greater majesty in its proportions, a surer set to its foundations. Its airy spires mount higher toward the sky, and the light from its countless windows floods the valley to your very feet. One more stiff climb and you must attain it.

Can you make it? Can you meet the challenge of that last height? And having attained it and flung your banner on high, can you bear to have the door closed against you once more and follow the vision that still beckons ahead?

We climb one level at a time until the heights are reached. It is not for us to say, "I have finished and here I will abide." Again and again, as we settle down to rejoice in our well-doing,

we find ourselves pushed out and driven hard ahead toward some end we dimly vision and wistfully serve.

'Tis the way of life. 'Tis but the way she has of chipping off the husks that the light of the spirit may shine through. The middlings and the wee fellows she let by lightly. Those of full stature must suffer her way.

THE FOLKS

NO MAN lives alone. No matter how personal the situation, the folks cannot be excluded—even from your thoughts. It is of them, and through them, and by them we live, and though you may cherish your reserves, you are aware that you keep no secrets. Life is the one pure democracy—the one realm where one man is but another man's brother whose ways, though devious, are well known, soberly judged, and richly loved.

The reason of youth's eagerness to seek and follow fortune does not lie entirely in the fortune. A lot of it rests in the longing to hear what the folks will say, when, the journey accomplished, the traveller comes home. There need be no fear of the justice and rightness of the decision, for the folks can be trusted to take the true measure of a man.

They love plain ways and their faith is founded on the simple things that make life wholesome. They are fond of old words—like *decent* and *honourable* and *upright*—words worn smooth in the service of many generations until they shine with the remote radiance of friendly stars. You know that if you measure up they will bring out those old words in your honour and bestow them upon you as a king might bestow his most coveted decorations.

No impossibilities are asked of you—just that you fight a good fight. The folks know. In them the ages have deposited much of the sorrow and pain and joy and bitterness of living. To them there is no new good, no new bad, in this world. All the goodness and all the evil since the beginning have gone into their seasoned salty souls and they still find life sweet at the core.

Great possessions will not win them. Theirs is a verdict none may buy. You may return as poor as Job's turkey or as rich as old Midas, and they will make no sign; but if you have stood

stiff-backed for the things they hold dear, those ancient, intangible things symbolized by the fine old words, *honourable* and *decent* and *upright,* their faces as they turn toward you will glow as the morning sun. They will call out the band and be down at the station when your train pulls in, each of them holding a shiny-faced child by the hand.

You youngsters who march toward fortune's castle ever travel Janus-faced. Each step in advance means a backward glance toward home and the folks. With each ringing challenge the wistful echo drifts back, "What will the folks say now?"

Don't you know? It is the answer within you that drives you on, that makes you ask and hope for a sign of approval. Honour and decency and uprightness are your heritage and the folks back home are waiting to see what you do with it; waiting to cheer and throw up their hats and shout, "'At-a-boy, Baby," when your train comes in.

It is worth it all. Make no mistake about that. The day is coming when you will give all you have to hear a shaky old voice say, "I'll say you've done well. The folks are right proud."

THE ART OF IDLING

"WHAT you going to do, Billie?"

"Nothin'. Just nothin' a-tall. Just lie here and watch the people go fussin' by," and the urchin threw himself face down under the pine tree that marked the high terrace overlooking the street.

He lay steeped in the joy of idleness, taking deep draughts of content from the blue sky shimmering down through the pine fringes, from the voice of the breeze whispering through the branches, from the sun-warmed, sweet-smelling earth. Instinctively, the task-wearied child had turned to the earth, his mother, to feast his soul.

Down the walk came a pompous man pushing aside the atmosphere with his cane, striding briskly as one about the king's business. Wicked delight brimmed the youngster's eyes and he called, "Mister, O Mister, p-p-l-ease."

The hurrying footsteps slowed down and the gentleman turned a frowning, furrowed face toward the teasing urchin. "What do you want?" he growled.

"How far'd you been if I hadn't called you, Mister?"

Later, when his mother chided him, he seemed scarce repentant. "Yes, I know I oughtn't, but what's his hurry? He's all the time working. Can't he stop even a minute to smile?"

A man must be about his business, 'tis true, but isn't it a part of his business to ease his body and content his soul? That is best done under the open sky. Why else is the world so mysteriously lovely?

Why else the cathedral of the forest so magically carpeted and canopied and lighted? Why the healing silence enshrined in mountain and forest and sea? Surely that man might idle a time and hold deep talk with himself and grope a bit nearer the heart of things.

You who go about your business so gravely

absorbed, so tensely strung as to vibrate to every anxiety, may be a generation beyond the carefree urchin in time and wisdom but he is hurling a fragment of truth at you.

What will it profit to pound, pound, pound, day after day, piling up goods for the strong box? Of what use the riches stored against the day when you shall enjoy them? The days that have pleasure in them are here, those to come after will bring little but the dust and the must of the strong box.

How far would you have been if instead of stopping to play with the saucy urchin you had held the extra conference? How much farther along the road to happiness would you have travelled if, instead of lying on the sand listening to the sea beat out its age-old hymn, you had read the contract again, just to make sure? Only the distance from yourself to yourself—a short enough journey.

So I'm going to a place I know well, where there are no papers and no telephones, and where the mails are three days late, and I'm go-

ing to lay me down under a bearded old cedar and let my mind drift off across the lake to the blue haze of the distant hills—"the hills from whence cometh my help."

I am going to watch the sun set and the stars come out and go to sleep with a sense of the great strength and glory of all that is above and below and about me. I am going to tramp the hills and rest in the forest and swim in the lake, just me and myself.

Then, by and by, when I feel the currents of power strong within me, when my emptiness has been filled from the limitless reservoirs of the earth, I am coming back. Truly, a man should be about his business.

A BIT OF RELIGION

"NO, I don't put much stock in religion," said the old business man to the lawyer as they strolled to the first tee. "Haven't been in a church since I was married."

"Me either. Get along just as well without it. You can't swallow all the things the preacher says. Don't jibe with life."

"No. Not much use in drilling rules into your head in the Sunday school only to find they don't hold when you get outside."

"Exactly. There goes Snathe. Glad we missed him. Seems to have difficulty counting his score."

"Yes? Perhaps he never learned to count beyond three when he was a kid. What you learn as a kid sticks when you're a man, they say."

"Doesn't it? You know when I was a little fellow my mother used to pound that into me.

Play your game straight or quit. She hated cheating. You know I'm a bit superstitious about it myself. Can't get by with it somehow.

"When I find myself playing with a chap who forgets a stroke or two I'm tempted to do the same thing. I argue that it's a legitimate handicap, and all that. But as sure as I do it once I dub the next hole. Sure. Never fails. I'm afraid to do it because I'd spoil my game. Superstitious."

"You know, I'm a bit superstitious like that myself. In other ways. I know what you mean, all right. When I go down to the office in the morning lots of times I'm not feeling just right. Awful grouch on until about ten o'clock.

"Well sir, I want to tell you that if I say or do a mean thing to any of the boys in the office, or snap at the stenographer, something goes wrong right straight off. Fact. Got so I don't dare to be mean. Pay up for it every time. Guess everybody has some superstition."

They walked on together for a time, thoughtfully silent. Then the lawyer chuckled and

said, "Just struck me. What we are calling superstition was what our mothers used to call religion. H'm?"

"Come to think of it, maybe it is."

Though we go far from the church edifice on Sunday mornings, farther than we ought, we never get very far from what we learned from our teachers and mothers when we were very little. They called it religion and we call it ethics and morality and even superstition. But it is the same old truth whatever term we give it.

Deep down in the heart of every one of us is the love for cleanliness and decency and right living that we were started out with, and sooner or later it rises to meet our need. We are not so godless, so bereft of spiritual vision as we sometimes think we are.

PEBBLE PICKERS

ALONG the beach contented children gather pebbles. At their feet stretches the vast and restless sea, but they, engrossed in their soothing task, pay no heed save to edge away from its rough caress.

One lad among them is different. In contrast to the others he dashes along the beach in his rough bathing suit, eyes flashing and voice athrill with the laughter of living. "Come," says he, "sit on the rock and see what I bring you."

He slaps the wet sand with his bare feet and splashes into the wake of a wave that breaks in white bubbles about his ankles. Then with a thrashing splashing pounce he is down in the receding waters. Up he comes with both hands full and races toward the rock, shaking the wet

hair out of his eyes and guarding his salvaged treasure. "See what I've brought you."

Cupped in his hands lies his toll of the sea. The streaming pebbles sparkle with life and colour, the golds and blue and greens mixed with the gray of the dove's breast and the reds of the sunset. Twined about them are the shreds of green and brown seaweed. Sparkling between them are the crystal grains of sand, fragments of the cliffs of the mermaids. Gleaming against a strand of slimy sea moss lies an exquisite, pearly shell.

His offering throbs with the pulse of the sea. It carries the tang of the salt spray and the odours of the deep. It bears the traces of the eternal grinding and smoothing and shaping toward a destined end.

With wet quivering hands he holds up the treasure and pleads "Can you see what I've brought you? Can you see it? The others have nice, dry, tidy ones, but can't you see mine?"

Oh! it is easy and safe to pick the pebbles

along the high dry shore. But what of the lad who plunges into the sea and brings up fresh, sparkling treasure? Is he to be pushed aside, scorned, driven off? Is there to be no daring? No adventure? Are we ever to cling to the old and safe, adding nothing, subtracting nothing, learning nothing?

Life is naught that is finished. It is rather the wave that tells of the stirring of the deeps. It searches and urges, it changes and shifts, it tears down to build up. It rolls in, a tumultuous tide, tossing pebbles high on the beach where they may lie and bleach and dry out and become the solid ground of the past—creeds and philosophies and customs worn smooth and polished to death. We contentedly pick them over and over with not a thought for the wealth of the tide roaring by.

Let us not be too nice to splash in with the lad who dares the sea and with him scoop up our pebbles, fresh and dripping and grimy, from the deep sea bottom.

AN OLD FAIRY TALE

IN THE days before books were written, the older folk, filled with love and compassion for childhood, polished the jewels of truth and wisdom they garnered on their way, wrapped them in the shimmering wonder and beauty of the fairy tale, and gave them to their children. And because they were woven of the very threads of life itself, the old tales have lasted from generation to generation, ever wise, ever true.

We love fairy tales. From childhood to old age we never tire of them. Remember how we used to sit on the floor to listen and chuckle delightedly and thump with applausive heels when the story-teller reached the part, "and that was neither too much nor too little, but JUST right." And then we grew up and forgot the fairy tale—which was too bad for us.

We grew up and decided that, for many very good reasons, we must gather and hold fast many things, especially money. We set about making our fortune earnestly, because its getting meant comfort and a measure of happiness for those we loved. It doesn't take such a lot of money to bring happiness and contentment to those we love and who love us. These all live in the place of "and that was neither too much nor too little, but JUST right."

We forgot that and toiled on piling up money until we had built a barrier between us and all the happy things we had started out to do. A voice whispered in our ears, "Go on Take power unto yourself. With money comes power and honour and glory. They fill the world. Let the little things go."

Power was ours, but with power came responsibility, cares, that drove off sleep and peace and friends, leaving only weariness and a fretted conscience and stark loneliness. Joy rarely sits on the thrones of the mighty. Hers is that lower place, "and that was JUST right."

But some turned aside into quiet places where they built cuddly brown houses of many windows whose lights caught the rose and gold of the mornings and the crimson and purple of the sunsets and sent them flashing across the valley in a thousand glories. In the gardens about them the flowers bloomed and the birds sang in their season and little children made merry with playworn dolls and tiny shovels that they dropped from their hands when they spied the story-teller coming down the path.

"Tell us 'gain," they cried. "Tell us 'gain, 'specially where it says, 'and that was neither too much nor too little, but JUST right!' "

True, there must be the king and the queen in every fairy tale. Poor things, always looking for something—a guard for their treasures, or a true prince to marry the beautiful daughter, peace for their racked minds, and a ray of joy to lighten their heavy hearts. Theirs is that high, bleak place where the old tale says, "and that was too HARD."

Life is but a tale that is told. We, you and I

and the neighbours, have much to do with the telling, much to do toward the happy ending. We might just as well make it "and that was neither too much nor too little, but JUST right."

THE LAUGHING PLACE

LOUD laughter shows the vacant mind." Well, let it. What of it? The mind needs to be vacated, needs to be swept by gales of laughter and illumined by little chuckles. We are growing too dignified. We choke down laughter and smile in intellectual aloofness. "Laughter holding both his sides" is frowned upon.

But it is laughter we need. Laughter that takes hold deep down and works its silent way up through our quivering helpless bodies until it breaks into peals of hearty, rollicking, roaring mirth. Laughter gone to seed. Laughter that takes strength of itself and soars away, carrying us into an ecstasy of blissful nothingness.

Don't tell me that the world is a solemn place and that man has but a brief and fun-less moment upon it. I will laugh you to scorn. What

were frogs made for? And monkeys? And little children? And you and I?

There is no use denying it. We may choke down our laughter and try in politeness to remember that we ought not to laugh at people but with them. The truth remains that we first delight to laugh at them and then with them. And that is healthy and human. It doesn't do for one to get to the place where one cannot laugh at one's self and expect others to laugh too.

In spite of the fact that Taft was the President of these United States and is now a power in our courts, we love him with a hearty and undignified love, for he can laugh and make us laugh.

He stands on the platform to address us. A slow smile spreads over his kindly face. It breaks into little sparks about his eyes and ripples over to his ears. Faint gurglings and chucklings come from his huge middle. We smile broadly.

He starts a story, but after the first sentence it is lost in roars of laughter, laughter that looses

itself from all cause, shakes itself free, and leaves us limp and aching and gloriously rested. Our minds have been vacated, swept, and garnished. We have been infected by the laughter of a great soul. We have been allowed to forget ourselves. Blessed privilege of those that can laugh.

Man has a mission on this earth. True. But he does not perform it entirely with his body. His spirit must bear the greater part of the load, and exhilarating laughter will ease it of the cramped and wearied body and set it free and rejoicing. Then let us lead our souls to the laughing place.

For some it is the sea with its changing moods, its haunting voices, its hint of the infinite that sets the soul free and bids it play. To some, the mountains, the wind in their faces, the challenging heights bring release and exhilaration, and they shout aloud in their gladness.

Or is it Charlie Chaplin with his adorable nonsense, Mary with her flirting curls, Shaw taunting us to laugh at ourselves? To each his

own. Only go and laugh. Laugh loud and long.

Stop smiling in cool courteous criticism and let laughter take deep hold and shake you free, free as when, as a little child, you rolled upon the grass in helpless, tearful laughter at nothing at all but the pure joy of being alive. Hasten to your laughing place.

SPENDING OUR HAPPINESS

FUNNY folks are we, you and me and the neighbours. Sadly funy. One of the things we do, one that should make us laugh at ourselves if we weren't so desperately serious about it all, is saving up the good time we are to have some day. Saving it for when the children grow up, or when we retire, or when the right time comes along.

We generally begin by saving money. We lay it by against the time when we shall need it, and then we fail to notice that the time of need has gone by, and we hoard on and on like chipmunks, with neither sense nor enjoyment in the hoarding.

Time speeds by and we do not notice that the shadows are moving across the face of our life until at last they move no more, and the gray darkness settles down, and the great stillness fol-

lowing it tells that for us there shall be neither sunlight nor shadow nor moving of hands again. The time has passed and the stored treasure lies dead beside us. For one's treasure is but the shadow of one's dream, and the dream vanishes with the light of the eyes.

We cheat ourselves out of the enjoyment of our children for we save that up too. "Some day," we tell ourselves dreamily and with deep-down smiles of happy content, "some day we are going to have a real day with the kid. We're going to find out what is inside his funny old head. We're going to sit still and let him climb into our lap and have him poke his finger in our eyes and ears and pretend to gobble him up and then let him turn our pockets inside out and find wonders hidden therein, and just listen to him laugh. We certainly are. Soon."

Then we stretch out our legs and take up our newspaper and listen to his mother putting him to bed and hushing him lest he disturb dear tired old Daddy. By and by, we lay aside the paper and look about for him that we may invite

him to our empty lap, and he is not there; but there is a stranger-youth who speaks to us politely and with courteous aloofness that somehow hurts. The laughing prattler flitted by while we saved up his playtime. The treasure has been spilled on the ground and wasted. We shall never taste its flavour.

And we save up the kind words we are going to say some day. Some day when things settle down a bit we are going right over to the old friend and tell him how much good he has done us and how we really feel about him. He's been a mighty good friend. Few like him.

We'll tell him the fine things we have thought of him all these years and have saved up on purpose for this royal occasion. Our hearts are warm with the glow of the pleasure in store for the old fellow, and then the message comes that there will never be any royal occasion. Time has passed by.

We had not noticed that, while we waited and saved the pleasure, the old man with the scythe and the hourglass, who marches so steadily and

so stealthily through the breadth of the land, had placed his mark on his brow and promised a swift return. No. We had been too busy, too eagerly storing up happiness for the future. And now where is it?

So we save and save our happiness until in the end we die of starvation. What do the children care about our stored treasures? What good to our friends our silent thought? What do they care about our hoarded emotions? Not one fleeting moment of piping song would they give for it all. Not a single thrilling note.

Swiftly, then, open up the storehouse of love and laughter. Release the happiness you hoard and see the treasures multiply. Open the springs of old friendships and let the spirit of eternal youth flow out. Search out the childish laughter and a rill of it will grow to a river of joy to bear you straight to the Celestial City. Let us spend our happiness lest it fly from us.

WITCH-HAZEL

THE witch-hazel bush grows by the edge of the wood. Growing is scarcely the word to use for the witch-hazel bush. Rather she poises on the edge of the dim wood ready to dance off, calling to you over her shoulder, only to discover herself, quivering with laughter, on the very spot where first you glimpsed her.

She's coquettish, too, about her blossoms. If you are not sharp you will miss them, for she waits until all the wood folk have done flowering before she hangs out her scraggly yellow blossoms, different from anything you expect, cool and surprising and full of sunny chuckles.

Long ago I learned to love the cool healing of the spirit of witch-hazel, because, when I hurt myself, Father, instead of pitying me, lovingly splashed me with its soothing waters. "Well,

well. Didn't you know that posts do not take off their hats to boys? They stand still and let lads look out for themselves.

"No, no. You stay here with me for a little while. You couldn't let the other boys see that bump on your head and tears on your face. It would never do to have them feeling sorry for you." Then he would tell me a gay little story, and by and by I would wake up, my head still on his shoulder and the bump quite well.

There was no pity for me, just love and a splash of witch-hazel, which is quite a different thing when you come to think about it. Pity stoops to the prostrate, and there is that in her too gentle touch and tone that makes men squirm. Pity calls out all the weakness in us and bids us remember that we are frail creatures who must soon return to the dust of our beginnings, but love calls out our full power and inspires us to stand up and give account of ourselves and remember that men can act like gods if they will.

So many are ready to pity us, so few to love us.

It is easy to say, "I'm mighty sorry for this, old man. Do call me up if there is anything I can do." Every tone, every syllable, announces "Of course, there is nothing to be done. You bumped yourself and you are crying, and it is too bad." And as the door closes softly against the too light tread of the pitying friend, grim memory searches in her pocket and presents you with a bit of timeworn truth: "Pity killeth envy," and bitterness enters your soul.

I have a friend who actually loves me, and when I raise a bump on my spirit he hastens in, drenched with fresh air and grinning cheerfully. "Shame, I call it. Downright shame. To you, too, the best man they have in the country." Then he laughs heartily and says, "You're looking fine. That-a-boy. Say, the links are great. What about a game? Come on, and I'll lick the spots off you."

Now, I know well that I am not the best man in the country, or even on the block, but the splash of witch-hazel is soothing to my bruised spirit, and I smile and reach for my sticks.

Friendly love never lets you feel that she is sorry for you, never makes a burden of her service. She gives you a hand over the rough place and then goes dancing merrily down the road, the jaunty scraggly flowers in her hair trailing a clean, sharp perfume behind her. She takes but a few steps along the way with you, for she would not make her presence obvious. She balances a light foot on the brim of the dim wood, ever ready, ever waiting by the witch-hazel bush.

Who would be pitied when he might, so bewitchingly, be loved?

GROPING

WE ARE restless creatures, never at peace with ourselves, never content with our lot, ever in search of an abiding-place and finding no rest for the sole of the foot. The birds of the air and the beasts of the field take no thought, but man searches and questions and will not be stilled.

"Who is God?" asked the grave-eyed self. I don't know. I look into the sky on a night when it is deep dark blue, filled with swimming stars. Over my head arches the Milky Way, a spray of star-dust shot through with millions of gleaming stars—a gesture of the Creator.

Low in the sky rides the cool, shining moon, flooding the earth with light indescribable, throwing shadows purple black under the trees, creating a fairy world for lingering lovers. I look with wonder-startled eyes, but no hint of

the matter comes to me. I would gather and hold to me a glint of this beauty. But the light wind of morning wafts it away with the promise of other loveliness.

Close to the old rail fence stands a cluster of mallows that glow in the sun, each huge flower of a texture and sheen beyond the skill of mortal weaver, of a line and form that fills the heart of the artist with adoration and despair. Gay, taunting, aloof, and bewitching, they grow by the old rail fence. I stand beside them in wistful silence. They are of God. I can know no further.

"True," says the prodding soul, "the loveliness of this earth is past knowing, but why am I here? I work and I play; I suffer agony and again I rejoice greatly. I pass away as I came, a lonely, questing stranger, groping endlessly. Why?"

I don't know. On the plains of Judea there was born in a manger a Child of poverty. A star lighted His birth and sank from sight. He struggled and lived—a man of sorrows, ac-

quainted with grief. He was blameless; there was no fault in Him—yet He died the death of a malefactor. Died, and lives always.

Countless hosts of men have come here asking the same question and answering it by their eager desire to live high-spiritedly, holding hard to their deep-rooted faith in the immortality of their living.

"Ah, but what is life that we cherish it so? What is it that defies time's effort to bind it; that eludes pursuit, only to return and return eternally when we have ceased to be concerned?"

Once the students of a famous laboratory pressed their master for an answer and he set them a problem: "Take these barleycorns and analyse them. Now make some barleycorns complete, perfect, in their chemical elements. So. Now I shall plant some barley from my field, and do you plant the barley of the laboratory, and we shall see."

From the barley of the field came new barley, but from the scientists' barley came no sign save silence. "What, then, did you leave out

of your barley? Certainly no material element. 'Twas the life germ, the breath of the Creator."

We believe. We trust. We have faith in this breath of life that is breathed into our souls directly from the soul of the Creator—and we know we are here for some destined end and good. For God would have it so, and God is good.

SCARS

LIFE wounds all of us. At best, there is sorrow enough to go round. Yet, because the deepest wounds are those of the soul and hidden to mortal sight, we keep on hurting each other day by day, inflicting wounds that Time mercifully scars over. But the scars remain, ready at a touch to throb angrily and ache again with the old, wild, gnawing pain.

Do you remember the sharp-tongued shrewish aunt who lined up the children of the family one day and pointed you out as the ugly one saying, "Goodness; looks like nobody in this family. Such hair. And feet as big as an elephant's."

You took it standing up and silently, but you were wounded to the quick, and to this day the mention of the woman's name tears at the old wound and it hurts. None of your children

will ever hear her name, and the sight of it even in print brings on a restless hour.

And there was the time when your friend, your very best friend as you thought, failed you. When the loose-tongued gossips started the damaging story about you and he was pressed for a word he said, "Well, of course, he's all right. I know he's all right, but I don't want to be mixed up in this thing. Can't afford it. Have to think of my own name and my own family. Good fellow, but I must keep out of this."

For weeks and weeks you carried the pain in your heart. The story was bad enough, but that would right itself. The idea that he should fail you, that he had not rushed to your side at the first hint of trouble, was unbearable. He came around again after it was all over but the sight of him only renewed the ache in your heart and the throb of pain in your throat. The scar was thin, and the torn soul beneath it quivered.

We all bear scars. Life is a struggle and hurts must come. But why the unnecessary ones? Why hurt the souls of little children?

Why say things to them that they must remember with pain all their lives?

Why say the smart and tart thing that goes straight to the heart of someone we love simply because we would relieve ourselves of the day's tension and throw off a grain of the soul's bitterness?

It will not serve us in that day when soul stands to soul, naked before the bar of judgment, to say we did not know. We did know, for we had suffered in kind and suffering should have taught us to understand another's pain.

Who are we to inflict wounds and suffering and scars on those about us? Staggering, blind mortals, groping from somewhere "here" to somewhere "there," conscious of little save the effort to stay "here" yet a little longer. It behooves us to travel softly, regarding each other's happiness, particularly where our path crosses that of those dependent upon us for happiness, or where it enters into the hearts of little children.

THE BEAUTIFUL ISLE

THERE is a beautiful isle called Somewhere. Each of us holds clear title to it, although its location is a personal and profound secret. A man wearied by the day's work or discouraged by its result slips away to his beautiful isle, and the irritating concerns of the day fade into nothingness, the load of duties drops from his galled shoulders.

Once afoot in that delightful place, a man tarries blissfully, restoring his soul. There, everything is as he would have it; everything is touched with a transcendent and mysterious beauty. His tread is airy and his heart is light. He carries no weight who travels in his Isle of Somewhere. And he tastes sweet peace.

To be sure he cannot stay there long. He belongs in a very definite world where each is weighted according to his strength; a place

where each pays for his taste of beauty, his vision of hope; the sane, beautifully balanced world of the workers.

But he can stay long enough to stretch the wings of his spirit so they may become sky-sweeping pinions. He can withdraw for a little and dwell on those things that are meat and drink to his soul. He can feed his hope and renew his faith in that better part of him.

We hear much these days about the practical man. We have a tradition regarding him and every so often we send the town crier in hot pursuit of such an one to lead us to the Promised Land, the Isle of Somewhere that we vision for the moment. "What we need is a business man. A hard-headed practical business man with no nonsense about him. These dreamers are the ruin of the nation."

Fortunately for us, we do not get him even when we believe we do. The most successful man is the one who has a well-marked road to his Beautiful Isle. The neighbours, of course, know nothing about it. All they know is what

happens after he has been on a prolonged visit to the secret place. They see him after he has breathed deep of its inspiring air; after his foot has touched the magic soil and taken on the stride of untiring and unflinching pilgrimage. All they know about it is that here is a man who sees farther and more clearly, who does more completely, more surely, more happily, than other men. By these signs he is a practical man. Well, he is. He is drawing on his inheritance. There is stored within each of us some of the wisdom and the power of all the men of all the ages. The wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job, the spirit of the Crusaders and the daring of the Masters of the sea are ready to our call. Out of the past their voices speak to us, their spirits fire our own. But only in the silence.

Only in the Beautiful Isle of Somewhere can we close out the nagging of the hour and call the deep hidden forces within us to our aid. To each his own place, his own way. Cleveland went a-fishing. Colonel Roosevelt hunted the

stillness of the forests. Cardinal Mercier knelt at the foot of the altar. John Finley walks all night under the stars. Your grandmother reads an old book that speaks of a peaceful land where there shall be no more tears, no more night, no sorrow. A place all beautiful and bright. And from that promise she draws strength to go on for another day.

A day of working under the sun sends the most practical of us to seek rest and renewal of spirit. Only the very, very young and untaught have not the secret of the Beautiful Isle of Somewhere.

MIRACLE WORKERS

A MAN is what he does. His work is his life. Most of us never truly live because we are so afraid to die. We are for ever retreating to the safety of certainty. We spend our days furtively, one eye on the familiar path, the other on the alluring and dangerous trail that leads over the brim of the world to that delightful place where wonders are usual and miracles common. Like Alice in Wonderland, we nibble on courage until we rise to towering heights—we can almost see over the edge—then, aghast at our own shadow, we hastily gulp down a morsel of fear and shrink to familiar and comfortable littleness.

It takes courage to live and to do a day's work. It takes more courage to stretch the day's work out beyond ourselves until it carries us into the open field where there are no guide posts and

no trails, nothing but a waiting silence. We are alone with our work in our hands and our spirits groping off in the infinite. If we take another nibble of courage and choke down the panic and push the job ahead of us, we shall see a miracle and set up a new landmark.

Why not? Miracles have happened and will happen again. Once a well spring gushed from a rock in the desert; once the sea stood back while a people marched over, dry shod; once a pillar of fire led the way by night through the wilderness. All things are possible to the high-spirited. Washington crossed the ice-jammed river and took Trenton. Kasson and his good dog Balto reached Nome with the precious serum. Miracles are wrought every day.

They who cross the line of safety to go in search of miracles will surely meet them. They are wrought in moments of grave peril. In the time of extremity, when the brave soul has staked all he is and has been or hopes to be on the venture. It is then that the rock opens and the spring gushes forth. Why not for you?

You are in yourself a miracle. You do not know where you came from nor where you are going. You do not know when you are going nor how you are to go. It is certain that you came into this world and that, one day, you will go out from it. But not yet, if you will it so. Not until you have really lived your minute and seen your miracle work.

Why so fearful? The great divides of life are marked by the breadth of a hair. Comedy merges into tragedy and smiles put rainbows in our tears. Doubt trembles on the lips of faith, and death and life are shadowy sisters whose faces we have never seen fairly. It may be that in guarding the passage of our fears we are blocking our own path toward the very thing we crave.

Then, at least, we can live bravely. We can take our work in our hands and go on, on past the barriers, for beyond them miracles begin. We can dare and we can adventure, for we know that here is neither beginning nor end, nothing but a promise, a hope, and a wondrous miracle.

OUR GIRLS

YOU may be certain that when Adam and Eve reached the comfortable middle years, they sat by the fire and bewailed the ways of their daughters. The sons were not so bad—save Cain, of course. But how account for the daughters!

We in our turn are accounting for the daughters. We are still crying halt while they race ahead and turn laughing faces over their shoulders toward us as they leave us behind—wild, care-free, joyous creatures refusing to be guarded and guided and patted. As well try to guide and pat the brook!

How lovely a thing it is as it comes dancing down the hillside, its waters cloud-shadowed, aglint in the sunshine, deep brown in cool pools, where the thirsty stoop to drink and remain to refresh their souls in drafts of loveliness!

Ferns of an exquisite loveliness dip their green fringes in the light-flecked waters and wave cool greeting to the flowers that creep close to the edge and venture dainty steps in the shallow water between mossy old stones. Stanch old things that have stuck to their beds for ages and ages and ages, guarding the flow of the brook.

Trout, speckled with flakes of forgotten rainbows, play about the gnarled roots of old trees and frisk in and out between the stepping-stones where barefooted children slip and splash and laugh to find their clutching fingers empty and cold, while the taunting brook curls by, smuggling off the rescued prize.

The brook gurgles and bubbles and rushes on, patting an old stone on its revered head and slapping the face of another standing stark on the banks, purling softly about the feet of the child sailing his paper fleet. Care-free, saucy, laughing brook, racing ahead to meet the river that will carry it to the sea!

It deepens and broadens, and its song takes on a richer note. Fed by the rains and the snows,

it roars a broad torrent, brimful to its banks. On it moves, deeper, stiller, solemn in its hidden power as it nears the dam.

Splash, splash, clatter! It takes the leap with a roar that shakes the banks, and the grim mill-wheels that have stood there waiting, always waiting, catch it in their hundred arms and toss it into a storm of foam and spray. The great wheels move; round and round and round they go, a world of power in their every revolution.

A last dash through the clattering wheels, and the broken brook gathers itself together and moves on majestically to the river toward the sea. Gone are the fringing ferns and the dainty wild-flowers. Gone the lilting song and the purling dance over the stones. In their stead are the dignity of power, the majesty of repose, and the calm of experience.

It has always been so. The woman carries the life stream to the children of men down through a valley brightened and made glad all the way from the hidden beginnings through the swift-

moving tale of achievement to the quiet merging in the end.

Why carp at the playtime of girlhood? Rather enjoy its moods and vagaries and quick-changing spirit. Rather refresh ourselves in its youth and beauty. The mossy old stones will hold, and the brook will run true, never fear.

ROSE COLOUR

I HAVE loved Michael since the day he stepped into my garden and said: "I do so like your garden. It looks as though the flowers had been invited to come in and live here."

I had been feeling rather low in my mind because somebody great in the world of gardens had passed mine by with a lift of the eyebrow and gone on to admire another where things were so neat, so trim, so proper that never a blade of grass leaned over to whisper into the ear of a neighbour, but each stood upright—close-cropped, correct—on grass parade.

In my garden it was not so. Here was no ordered beauty, but a riot of colour and a burst of joy, and a plant might grow wherever it found foothold. Perhaps, then, I had failed to make a garden? Then Michael came, and my world

was flooded with rose colour. He had given me my garden again and recharged my run-down spirit.

There was never such a one as he for finding the right word in its season. He never has to make search for it. It comes quick to his tongue. You can see it springing from the soul of him as he turns his kind eyes from your troubles toward you—not in sympathy—never that—but in pleased recognition and radiant expectation.

The strongest and proudest among us, working alone in our gardens, come to the drear afternoon when the scarlet of the poppy, the cool whiteness of the madonnas, the meanness of the pusley, and the crick in our backs blend into a gray fog that chokes the throat and dims the eyes. What's the use? For every plant we set we have to do battle. It is too much. Then Michael comes into the garden shedding rose colour, and we are born anew.

It would seem that he has hidden in the soul of him a bit of beauty that reaches out and touches the bit cherished in our own hearts, so

unerringly he finds it. He spies the shy forget-me-not and stoops to praise it. He scents the rare alpine hidden behind the rocks and ferns and kneels to adore it. No choice bit escapes him. "Fine! Great! Wonderful! Man, how do you do it?" And the beauty, the thrill of creation that we scarce dared to claim, springs into fullness and our way is illumined.

Beauty and the joy growing out of its creation must be fed from the overflowing, sympathetic, and understanding hearts of others, working like ourselves, and alive with the joy of working. The spirit of man must be fed on appreciation and praise, or it wilts and dies. Money will not do this. Great possessions bring no inspiration. Naught but the word fitly spoken can transform the drabness of drudgery into the rose colour of power and success.

BEGIN!

THE world is filled with ardent young people dreaming of great deeds to be done. Days pass, and the dreamers stand still—wishing, longing, fretting.

"If only I had your great factory," said one of them, "what couldn't I do!" The famous man smiled. He was thinking of his first work, carried on in the blacksmith's shed at the edge of a village common. "The way to begin is to begin, my son," said he. "Just begin."

You who dream of the great things to come, why don't you commence? Why do you wait for the campaign, the posters, the meetings, the influential names, the backing? Why must you float on rivers of ink? Why must you start where the toilers left off? Begin!

The people who do things that really matter do not wait for help. With their bare hands

and an idea, they start out, and hands are stretched toward them in blessing and benediction, and friendly hearts rally to their support.

Martha Berry started her school for the neglected children of the Georgia mountains in a wrecked log cabin, with two scared children. Lillian Wald began her Henry Street Settlement in a tiny flat in the tenement-house district, scrubbing the floors and tending the sick with her own hands. Doctor Grenfell went to the suffering people in Labrador without money or influence—just his wonderful ministering hands and an idea. They commenced.

The difference between the folk who do, and those who dream wistfully of what they will do, is not a difference of opportunity. It is a difference of spirit. The doers are fired with a determination that nothing can stagger; they are imbued with a faith that nothing can shake. They take their first steps alone and, as they believe, unaided.

But he who starts out to accomplish his destined end is never alone. Out in the silence

there are thousands waiting for the voice of their leader, for the first sign that here is one who sets out to blaze a new trail, a straight and narrow road that leads to his goal. Begin!

Write out the first page of the book that is to make the way easier. Get out on the corner and make the first speech of a campaign that is to open closed eyes to a nobler vision. Start the new shop in the corner of the old shed: begin the experiment out in the back kitchen. Begin!

The great joy of the thing lies in the beginning. The thrill comes each morning when you start the day with empty hands and the blazing idea, and nothing between you and the end of all things but your faith and courage. Begin!

Pin a gay cockade on your plumed helmet; fly your colours from your shining lance; mount your Pegasus and charge the heights. "The gods send threads to a web begun." Begin!

A TRYST

I WANT to meet you when the happy side of you is uppermost, the part of you that swings along blithely, not bothering. I want to meet you when the mellowed spirit of you, distilled from the long-trampled difficulties, has become something rich and fine and miraculously daring.

Matching our troubles but adds to their perversity. Why encourage them? I can, of course, tell you how the east wind howls down my chimney o' nights, smothering me with smoke and soot and ashes—and I get your smoke and soot and ashes full in the face for my pains. We can sit like dour witches bemoaning our woe and brewing bitter ale for our own drinking, to the end that we dance to a dirge. But enough!

I want to meet you when you are riding atop your troubles, unheeding, uncaring, your back

and your arms and your legs and your brain swinging free, and your hand running true to the task. I want to see you turning out the best job of your life. Then men taste real joy. Then the world moves.

Nothing worth while was ever accomplished when the man was bothering about it. All that rubbish had to be swept up and burned in the crucible of his soul, that power might flow to the labouring mind and body. A Farragut lashes himself to the mast, mocks the torpedoes, and smashes his way through, while we throw up our hats and cheer with him. A Pasteur cages a deadly microbe, and we laugh and cry and write his name in letters of gold. Bonny Belle, the Queen of the Air, poises herself in the peak of the tent for a breathless instant, and then dives down to the net with the ease and grace of a flying fish. *Boom, bang,* the bass drum thunders, and we shout in triumph with her. For the minute we shake off our chrysalis of earth, spread our wings and find life great fun.

So it was when Maugham swept his 'plane

from sea to sea in a victorious race with the speeding sun. To us who watched with muted breath, Fear panted by his side and Death perched on the wheel; but to Maugham they did not exist. He had cut loose from all that whispered of them. He had shaken himself free, and swung off on the wings of his spirit.

It is a great moment, that, when the dead weight of earth falls away and the soul of a man rides free. It is a flashing, fleeting glimpse of the immortality granted the soul strong enough and daring to throw off all that is untrue and do battle armed with the bare and awful truth. Divine is the restlessness that drives us toward this end. God-sent is the torment that will not let men rest until they have ventured for it.

I want to meet you in your great moment when you are greatly daring and soaring high, even though it be in the land of the lonely, and you are blithely leading a losing cause. I want to be there when the flag runs up, when your soul shouts victory though your heart break.

Winning or losing in the way of the world, what will it matter to us? We have seen what is hidden from those who sit safely. We have found that which is greater than victory, that which smiles softly on death. We have sojourned where earth falls away, and men's souls are born. I would meet you there.

TWO O'CLOCK O' THE MORNING

ALONG about ten in the evening, letters and books and sheets of yellow paper, and people who tell me things, begin to weary me, and a voice on the wire is a heaviness and an evil thing. It is time for bed.

With comfortable sighs I snuggle down and let go of all that I have been fast-clutching. My eyes close dreamily, and I become conscious of the stars swimming in a sea of serenity and beckoning me to sleep's buoyant, mysterious embrace. Blithely I slip off, blissfully forgetting —adrift and at peace. . . .

Bump, and my eyes fly open! I am awake in the darkness; and there, perched on my pillow, girding in my ear, sits Two o'Clock o' the Morning.

"Why," she begins in sleep-dispelling accusation, "why did you put that letter in the bottom of the stack without even opening it?"

I turn over stodgily, hoping that she will go away, but she stirs me with an appallingly bony finger and demands: "Why? Eh? Suppose he did want something? 'Twouldn't have hurt you, would it? You could have read the letter. Suppose his house is on fire, his children all burned?"

"Nonsense! Only last week——"

"Last week!" she hoots.

I thump the pillow vindictively, and she rises lightly and perches alongside the other ear. "Anything might happen in a week. Why didn't——"

"All right—all right! I will. Now go away. I'm going to count sheep. Don't interrupt me. One, two—seven—ten," I gabble recklessly; but my tormentor abides. I feel her eyes boring me before I hear her harping tongue.

"You might just as well have left it unsaid. Why didn't you read your letter the second time? Or why didn't you wait until the next day? You would have gotten a different tone,

a better attitude; and now the letter is gone. Your judgment was hasty—ill-considered. Why didn't you wait?"

This is awful. I turn over and over, wishing desperately that I could lie on both ears at once. But I can't, and she begins again.

"And that additional responsibility you took on to-day—why didn't you stick to your business? You have enough care there without new entanglements. It wasn't the money—you were just flattered because you were counted in, let in on the ground floor—why did you do it?"

I pretend deep sleep, but she tweaks my eyelids and grins derisively into my wide-open eyes. "Young man, I'm the one that knows you—knows you better than you know yourself. You know what you do, but I know why you do it. I see you wiggling out of the tight places; I see you dodging the difficulties; I see you swallowing the sweet bits the flatterers hand you. What have you got to say for yourself? Eh?"

"Nothing, Godmother—nothing at all."

"Right, my lad! Now repeat after me, and

mind you remember it, for to-morrow: 'We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord!' "

With a gentle pitying smile she sweeps away the crumbs of care she has sprinkled upon my uneasy bed, mounts her broomstick, and floats away.

Ah, Two o'Clock o' the Morning!

MOTHER IS WAITING

"MOTHER is waiting." We said that first as little children. It was good to visit foreign lands behind the red barn and the far orchard, but soon the strangeness palled upon us, there came a hint of fear, and we remembered with a lift of joy that at home, among beloved and common things, Mother was waiting. Hastily we called Towser and raced to Mother's arms.

Always, through good days and bad, Mother waited. That thought stayed us, a mighty wall of defense. We sallied forth now and again to try our strength, secure in the faith that, win or lose, we were conquerors in her spirit whose strength was the strength of ten.

When school, the place of alluring adventure, opened to us, we trod its halls with high heart and courage undaunted. What if the big

fellow threatened? Suppose the blue speller did floor us? And if we didn't get the right answer and had to stay in? Mother was waiting, and we'd tell her all about it, and the sky would clear again.

School ended, we took our modest share of honours, and the boys and girls crowded about with laughter and handclasps and invitations to join in the frolic. We liked it all. We were glad and proud, but wistful too. Our eyes strayed to the fringe of older folk, and we said: "Thanks, thanks. Just a minute, and I'll come. Mother is waiting." And we hastened away to show and share the fortunes of the day.

The years passed, and responsibilities doubled and trebled. Duties pressed and doubts beset us. Hope led us far afield, and often we were back behind the red barn or in the far orchard, and the longing to turn and flee was almost too strong to be fought down.

Dimly then we began to understand what Mother's waiting had meant to us. Vaguely we sensed its power. No passive, idle posture

in this waiting. It was the greatest driving force in our lives. It had pushed and pulled and prodded us forward. It had cleared the road for our hesitant feet. It had encouraged and cheered and inspired our efforts. It was a flaming hungry passion that knew no ease until its end had been accomplished.

We must go forth and perform wonders. We must explore the unknown lands, sail the uncharted seas, and bring back treasure to lay at her feet, for Mother was waiting. That expectant, impelling waiting was the trumpet call that dominated our lives.

And how lightly we accepted it! With what a casual air we took it as our right! How crude, how stupid we were! Only now, when her waiting is almost over and a chill dread clamps our hearts, do we realize a bit of the wonderful, beautiful consecration of the life of the mother who waited for us.

Mothers are the same the world over. Their days are spent in waiting, and their nights in watching. Blithely their children come and

go, bringing triumphs to be shared and wounds to be healed; and if they but carry the light of love in their eyes, the mothers are content.

"They shall not be ashamed that wait for me."

TO-DAY'S DAUGHTER

THE flapper powders her nose, powders it audaciously, in season and out. Why scold about it?

Ages and ages ago seamen bedecked the nose of their vessel, sprinkled it with blessed water, and set a brave figure upon it. About to adventure, they prayed whatever gods they knew to direct the prow of their vessel aright.

The flapper powders her nose in the same spirit. It is at once a salutation and a propitiation, a challenge and a prayer.

In the office of a chief of personnel, one sat shivering, awaiting to be called. "Tell me," she whispered hoarsely, "do I look all right? My nose isn't shiny, is it? I got to get this job. My folks need the money."

Behind the secretary's back as he ushered her

in for the ordeal, she gave one last wipe and pat, squared her shoulders and marched after him. The drift of powder made her feel that she looked all right; and when she looked all right, she could do all right.

In the face of social difficulties, she performs the little ceremony as her grandfather used to take snuff—with a certain calm aloofness and a proud disdain. When the senior class was rioting for the privilege of the floor, the flapper in the chair laid down her gavel, rose with the stretching ease of a wearied kitten, fastened her gaze on a young man in the rear who was bawling like the bull of Bashan—and powdered her nose.

He swerved for an instant and then sat down. In the lull that followed his retreat, she swept the meeting over him. No weak spirit was sheltered behind that nose. *Gallant,* is the word!

There are times when a girl's powder-puff carries with it much the same comfort and sustenance that a cigarette gives the boy going into

action. There's a telephone-girl in a little mountain village whose nose is mulched with powder and whose manners would shock one brought up on prunes and prisms. But the engineer and the village folk pronounce her grade A and a medal-winner.

One day when the last available man had been sent up the mountain to fight fire, she called the lookout. "I've sent out the last man with his ax and shovel. Now I've got to rustle. You won't get another ring from me for about three hours. Old Charley went up the hill a-blueberrying, with two women and a kid. He won't be able to get them down over the trail, so I'll have to take the old pile of junk and go in after them. He'll try to beat it to the pond, and I'll just about make it. Good-bye."

She pushed the battered car up a half-broken mountain road and brought down the old man and his party, half choked and wholly exhausted.

"Hullo, hullo, want anything?" she called to the man on the top of the mountain.

"Shovels, but there's no way of getting them

up here, and we can't stop to go down. Handles of that last lot were punk," he growled.

"Just wait a shake till I powder my nose, and I'll sail in with the shovels," she said.

Gallant little flapper, following your nose as Fate wills, sturdily wiping away the traces of tears with a dab of powder and sparring for time with a hint of rouge, may that nose lead you to pleasant places where all the paths breathe peace!

HER CLOTHES

WHY does our daughter wear such funny clothes? Why must she calcimine her nose and rouge her lips and do unutterable things to her brows and lashes? What's the idea of the jingling odds and ends that she ties to her ears and wrists? Such queer things as she wears on her head, and what bewildering shoes on her restless feet! So free and daring, is she a plague on this afflicted land or a blessing in lovely disguise?

That she is lovely you must admit—lovely in spite of the crudities youth always discloses to age. Her glance is level and keen. She walks with an air of sureness, swinging along with the stride of a cavalier. She speaks as one having nothing to conceal and understanding no reason for there being anything to conceal.

This is her chief characteristic, and to the

anxious watchers, her most exasperating one. "There should be reserves. Some things are not to be talked about. It is not in good taste to shout them at the top of one's voice."

"What things?" demands this bold creature. "Tell me what they are. Show me what it is you are hiding behind your silence. Let me look at what you are veiling in mystery. Out with the whole whispering tribe!"

So did her grandmother before her. To her we must look for the explanation of the girl of to-day. When, not so many years ago, a few women shingled their hair, wore stiff shirts and collars and severe serge suits, walked with a swagger and talked with a thump, they were demonstrating the simple fact that women were people. They had gone out against age-old conventions, and the dress and the manner were but the uniform.

Uniforms are very convenient. They spare one lengthy and embarrassing explanations, and protect one against the too prying curiosity of the uninitiated and the very dull. To be sure,

Dr. Mary Walker would have been Dr. Mary Walker without the trousers and the starched shirt, but she could not have made the demonstration that was necessary in her day and generation.

The present-day girl is due. The powder and rouge and gay dress, the manner and the "show me" attitude are but her inheritance from an older generation who rebelled against blind adherence to a worn-out code.

There is no need of being so nervous about her. The girl of to-day is stronger, finer, surer, and freer than those who have gone before. She is the daughter of her mother, the flower of her hopes.

No harm is going to come to the young woman who goes out to gather first-hand information and to taste life as it comes racing by. She will drink many a bitter draught? True. But being out "on her own," she can spit it out again, my friend. She will get many a bruise? True. But she will be able to defend herself, being free of body and spirit.

That is the meaning of her uniform. It is the symbol of her demand that she have a chance to find the right place, to laugh, the strength to fight through, and enough light to travel safely by. Why not?

AS THE LILIES

CLOTHES are tremendously important. Everybody, however aloof, however close to the crowd, is truly concerned about his dress. Our clothes become a part of us, a sort of extension put on to increase our size and influence in the world. They are our signal to the rest of the folk that we are highly alive and coming right swiftly.

There is a fine note of speed in the clothes of youngsters. The college student is a far more joyous and successful creature in his flapping trousers, his gaily striped tie, and his dented, rakish hat, than he would be in staid and sober garments. Clothes can create moods as well as support and express them, and the children need their aid. I have known a pair of brilliant socks, with tie and monogrammed hanky to

match, send a boy off to an examination in such a mood of conquest that he ate the job up when but a short half hour before he had decided that he was a failure and his life a fizzle.

What could be prettier than the girls in their jaunty skirts? With soft hats crushed over their bobbing curls, dashes of vivid colour sprawling across their blouses, they are a tonic for the stodgy and a challenge to the dull. Speeding along at sixty minutes to the laughing hour, they remind us how precious and how happy youth can be. No more hobbling of the young woman, no more drabness. Surely the next generation will rise to call her blessed.

The business man striding along in his brown tweeds would almost deceive you into calling him settled—that awful term for one who has choked off the hurtling stream of life—until you catch a glimpse of the orange threads scattered among the brown ones like a host of glad marigolds in a garden. Then you know that life still flows strongly within him and that the heart of him is blithe as a bird. If he must wear

brown tweeds, at least it shall be with a difference, and the knotted gold threads tell the story.

Age, the wise tell us, is a state of mind and has little to do with birthdays. When you reach the brow of the hill there is some comfort to be taken from the thought that the expression of the faith that is in you will go a long way toward making the wish come true. Why should one wear wrinkles or sad colours or limping lines, the uniform of decrepit age, when he can dress to match his singing spirit?

Clothes are in some subtle way part of our being. It would seem as though we spun them out of our being in spite of weaver and tailor. They are but our lengthened hands. We can select a colour that will bring a smile to our eyes, a style cousin to our bodies, a line that lets the heart flow easily along it and have a thread reminiscent of the days of care-free, speeding youth. We can stay with the youngsters a little longer.

For, after all, there is a spinning that lilies

do. From their hearts they draw the colour and the line and the sheen and the perfume that calls men to consider them. Their beauty is the symbol of the life within. None goes more beautifully dressed.

SECRETS

MAN, beyond all other creatures of the earth, is lonely. Well hidden within him lies the secret of his being, always aching to be told, always shrinking from the telling. The human spirit has no gift of tongues. It throws out shy signals which are to be read only by the most discerning eye, and that often after all significance has vanished.

Man remains stranger to men, and very lonely. Wistfully he strives to pierce the veil that divides him from his brothers, only to find that it must be worn down by the long friction of soul and body, and that the day of its falling is still far off. He must still guard his secret.

Behind his screen lies the soul that his daily toil is creating, the elusive thing rarely glimpsed, and never known truly. None may look upon a soul in travail. It is guarded as

though by the angel with the flaming sword throughout its trial. Thread by thread the protesting body yields its very substance to sustain it. To-day a grain of selfishness turns into silvery radiance under the hand of the builder, and to-morrow a bit of the heart's desire becomes part of the flame of its immortality. Slowly the body fines down, and triumphantly the soul surges forward, yet ever alone and in silence.

Then there comes the hour when the last threads between body and soul hang slack. The building is almost over. Comes the instant when the guarding angel says "Enough," and his sword cuts the last clinging threads, and the soul fares free for its passing. Often in that flashing instant there comes to you a stunning revelation, a hint of the cherished secret, a scintillating memory that thrills and uplifts you and drowns you in tears. But no words come to you or from you. There is always the touch of the inexplicable, of haunting beauty and unearthly glory.

How many times have you said afterward, "If we had only known. Why didn't he explain? Why didn't she tell us? How could we know?" as you turn over an old bundle of letters or thumb a creased paper that hinted of long worn sorrows and pressing burdens hidden for a lifetime. "We'd have felt so different. We'd have done so much better. We would have been kinder."

The soul cannot explain. It must be interpreted. The heart knoweth its own bitterness but it cannot utter it so that you can understand.

You never know the real story because nobody is ever at liberty to tell it. The core of the hurt was never brought out for your inspection; the yearning that tore the body apart and turned into the shining radiance of the soul cramped the tongue to silence.

Who, then, are we to judge one another? Who is to say he should have done this or that or the other? Only when all of the story is told can the judgment be rendered, and a soul speaks only to God who made it. If, then, there is

nothing of kindness we can murmur, nothing of love or comfort or understanding that we can bestow, suppose we pass by in silence, remembering that man is very lonely and bears his soul in secret.

THE QUEST

YOUTH is rebelling, protesting, struggling against life. The old ways are flouted; the new ways are without landmarks and the elders wring their hands and beat their breasts and prophesy evil. Let us take heart.

When man discovered himself a lonely, thinking being, in a world of unthinking creatures he asked, "Why?" and the answer came from within himself, "Search and find."

Ours is an eternal quest. For ever we search and question; who are we and where are we bound? Why are we set here questioning an infinite silence, mocked by mighty and invisible forces, ever driven on by the relentless craving to know, to understand, to fulfill a despairing hunger scarce defined?

No one who has studied the growth of a flower

or the development of a child need doubt the existence of a beautifully ordered plan and a transcendent purpose behind life on this earth. Where the plan leads or what the purpose is we may not discover, but the power of it, the serene loveliness, the sweet content that are in it and of it and all about it lift us beyond hurt, beyond sorrow, beyond death itself, to a sense of peace that is past understanding.

How shall we know the plan and the purpose to be our own? I cannot know for you. I know only that there is this purpose and this plan and that each must find his own. The answer is always within one's self. St. Francis laid down all that he had and went out a beggar with his bowl and his shining purpose. Washington went apart and prayed until the still small voice answered him. So did Lincoln. So must you and so must I.

I cannot prove this to you. I can only tell you of the miracle. Again and again I have seen youth struggle and fight and fume and fail and at last let go and stand waiting, listening for the

word that would send him out inspired by a burning purpose and sustained by a spiritual resolution that was not his own.

The brook must find its way to the sea, and though you check and thwart it until it foams in anger and breaks over its banks, though you stir and prod its depth until its clear waters are clouded and roiled, it will slip by, under and over and around, until at last it merges with the sea and is at rest, its purpose accomplished.

I believe that most of the unrest and protest and rebellion of youth is but the indication of the hidden purpose to express itself in harmonious relation to the great plan. And I believe, too, that directing youth toward the realization of that pure purpose is the high intent of the teacher.

SHADOWS

THE shadows that play about my garden are lovely. And friendly. In the beginning, in the days of my deep ignorance, little lightened to this day—a garden is such a bewildering romance—I was all for the sunshine.

"That white birch tree and the gray boulder yonder must come out so the sun can shine full on the flowers."

"Better wait a little," drawled old John squinting up through the branches. "They make shadders. You can't see a garden without it has shadders. And I have some lilies o' the valley and some foxgloves and forget-me-nots that likes shadders. Better wait a while."

So now I watch the shadows make the garden lovely. They shift the lights and bring out the form and colour that the flooding sunshine

merges into a luminous cloud. Patches of shadow and flecks of light filter down through the scraggy birch tree, and the bed of yellow iris becomes a cloth of gold. The gray boulder spreads its cool grayness and the rainbow poppies take on the texture of a queen's raiment. Like the pointing finger of the garden spirit, the slanting shadow of the pines on the knoll moves across the terrace, and whatever it touches awakens to new beauty and fresh life. The garden shines in the shadows.

You can really never see anything, whether it be mountain or man or garden, until the shadows begin tumbling about it. Under white-hot sunlight the outline is blurred. There is no depth, no tempting reflection, no inviting coolness. It is a time of achievement, of bare realities, heat and sweat and struggle. One can look, but until the shadows fall, one cannot see nor can one understand.

But as the clouds drift and the shadows fall there is a new picture. The surface that was so calm and so brilliantly smooth is broken now

into heights and depths, each reflecting and reflected, and the secret places are made known to the watcher beyond the shadow.

What do you know of a man under the high lights of his success? So little that you gird and grudge and grumble and pass him by with a curt glance of appraisal, a stranger. Not until the shadows fall upon him will you discover his hidden beauty and stop and enjoy and understand. Not until then will you know that he, too, is a man who loves and laughs, wins and loses and lives on, cherishing his own bit of beauty within him.

Against a gray-white wall in a place I know well, there stands the figure of a saint—just an ordinary statue that, at high noon, one passes with a careless glance. But at a certain time of the afternoon the shadows fall across it and throw a darkened figure on the wall, and oh, the story that shadow tells. All the love, all the patience and the power of the consecrated soul; all the beauty of the spirit of a man who did his work and loved the doing; all the proud humil-

ity of one who suffered, when suffering was the price of joy; all the divinity of manhood, shine out of that shadow. Within the shadow is the story of the saint.

A PARENT'S PRAYER

I HAVE *a boy to bring up.* Help me to perform my task with wisdom and kindness and good cheer. Help me always see him clearly, as he is. Let not my pride in him hide his faults. Let not my fear for him magnify my doubts and fears until I make him doubting and fearful in his turn. Quicken my judgment so that I shall know to train him to think as a child, to be in all things pure and simple as a child.

I have a boy to bring up. Give me great patience and a long memory. Let me remember the hard places of my own youth so that I may help when I see him struggling as I struggled then. Let me remember the things that made me glad, lest I, sweating in the toil and strain of life, forget that a little child's laughter is the light of life.

I have a boy to bring up. Teach me the love

that understandeth all things; the love that knows no weakness, tolerates no selfishness. Keep me from weakening my son through granting him pleasures that end in pain, ease of body that must bring sickness of soul, a vision of life that must end in death. Grant that I love my son wisely and myself not at all.

I have a boy to bring up. Give him the values and beauty and just rewards of industry. Give him an understanding brain and hands that are cunning to work out his happiness.

I have a boy to bring up. Help me to send him into the world with a mission of service. Strengthen my mind and heart that I may teach him that he is his brother's keeper. Grant that he may serve those who know not the need of service, and not knowing, need it the most.

I have a boy to bring up. So guide and direct me that I may do this service to the glory of God, the service of my country, and to my son's happiness.

AMEN.

TO-MORROW

I AM in love with To-morrow. Not all the warnings of the wise shall succeed in shaking my allegiance to that charming, elusive, beckoning sprite. I have pondered their sayings well. I have even written the pros and cons in parallel opposing columns, but not even the curt finality of "To-morrow never comes" has caused me to waver. I follow my rainbow lady; for To-morrow does come.

When To-day, who opened the morning with a promise of high-hearted adventure, drags herself toward the gray afternoon, the bloom of her dawning rubbed to stark boniness, her coronation robes tattered to rags, her trailing garlands lying in the ashes of disillusion, the thought that one must bear with her to the end is staggering. Without To-morrow the tragedy would be unbearable.

"Keep up your head and lighten your heart," she whispers. To-day must pass out with the night, and the tide and the evening breeze will sweep her out beyond return. Then I come. I will bring you strength and happiness and you shall move mountains. There's joy coming in the morning. Come on, let's plan for it so as not to miss a moment of it." So we build a castle where the cottage tumbled down, and we plant a flower where we buried a hope, and we sweep clean the hearth where we burned our mistakes and make ready for the coming of To-morrow.

She will come if you really expect her, but she is quick to scent unbelief, quick to fly from the precise and the grasping, leaving the field of To-day, so obvious, so tangible, so unsatisfying. For how could a dream come true if you never dreamed it? How could a wish come home if you never breathed it? How could your castle be built if you never planned it? Who bears the dream and the wish and the plan safe-brooded until it comes forth from the wreck of To-day? Why, To-morrow.

There is no use in croaking about the uncertainties of visions and dreams and plannings. What is more uncertain than To-day which you hold in your hands? Why not, then, look forward to To-morrow? Suppose we heeded the beard-waggers' warnings and doggedly held to To-day. Suppose we measured our comings and goings, our holding and giving, our striving and stopping by her steady stride? Suppose we trudged in her footmarks slavishly with never a straying aside? We should eat and sleep, and by and by die and be laid aside in the place reserved for us by To-day, never having had a chance to stretch our souls, with never a daring flight into the dangerous thrilling unknown, the kingdom where the castle and the princess and the giants guard the happy ending of our story. Would that be life?

No, no, don't listen. One must follow To-day. To-day says Must. But when under her tasking eye we have kneaded a batch of our daily bread and she nods a moment and leaves us alone for a little, there is nothing to hinder our

opening the gate and leaving the way clear for To-morrow. Just to open the gate and allow her to know we expect her? And to bend over slightly, listening?

To-morrow never comes? I know better. She has come to me often, full in the fact of girding To-day, and left rainbow gifts in my hand. Precious—hopeful—To-morrow, who never says "Must," but always "You may" and so makes To-day endurable and transforms the gray procession into a gay parade.

SEALED PACKAGES

DID you ever cross-fertilize two blossoms, harvest the seed, and plant it? You were possessed with an eager desire to know how the seed was going to turn out. Sometimes you could not resist taking a peep to see what was going on. That never did any good. You had to bide in patience until blossom-time came. Then you knew whether you had just a blossom or a prize-winner.

If you had a fine blossom you were pleased and proud. If you had succeeded in producing a prize-winner you were delighted, elated, grateful.

Children or seeds, it is much the same. When you are raising children, however, and take "peeps," the results are likely to be disconcerting. You look in one day and your heart sinks. He is a "policeman."

He is brusque and gruff. He arrests his dog. He drags him off a prisoner into the far corner of the room and pushes a chair in front of him. The miserable shivering prisoner pokes a pleading nose through the bars, but the "officer" knows no mercy.

You hope it isn't true and turn away, sorry you "peeped." You promise yourself you will not look again until blossom-time. You will hope.

Then, one day, you fancy you see something real. He has been constructing things with his mechano for weeks. He has made trucks and cars and cranes and mills. He asks you to buy him a motor, and you hasten to do so.

Now you think you know what you have. He is going to be an engineer. Runs in the family. His uncle is an expert electrical engineer. Fine.

But you discover that he has not hitched that motor to anything except the house current. He sat on the floor and watched the wheels go round and round. You doubt. You hear him offer to

trade the motor for a Chinese stamp with the boy across the way and you are sure. You are cured. After this nothing shall tempt you to "peep."

All of a sudden you are aquiver again. He goes to church three times on Sundays and begs to be allowed to go to prayer meeting Wednesday evenings. Nothing but your fixed rule that the children may not go out in the evening saves you from allowing him to go.

He plays church and takes a severe interest in the morals of his little sister. Once again you look up your family history, puzzled but still hopeful. There may have been a bishop or two in the collateral branches of the family.

Alas, one of the neighbours comes in and as tactfully as possible tells you that the boy has been breaking the glass in his conservatory and eating his prize strawberries all week. All traces of the ministry have vanished and left you stranded and gasping.

It is no use. Children are labelled "Not to be opened for thirty years." All you can do is

to select the best possible school, the best possible environment, preserve your sense of humour, and wait.

You will always get a flower. Occasionally you get a prize-winner.

THE ENCHANTERS

THE first of the beneficent tribe to enter and brighten my life was a man with a very black moustache and the ability to pick rabbits out of my pocket, coins out of my ears, goldfishes from my hair. When he went away taking the rabbits and the coins and the goldfishes with him I never grudged them to him. Gladly would I part with all the riches he mined from my hitherto unproductive person if he would but stay to charm my darker hours. When I hinted as much to him he smiled and said, very kindly, "Never mind, sonny. One of my brothers or sisters will be around this way to-morrow and make a magic for you, and you'll see rainbows with pots of gold at each end. See if you don't."

And of course it was true. It always has been true. The magicians come along and change

dull hours into gay ones and flit away leaving us happy and smiling if a bit wistful. When the weight of the days presses too heavily upon us and we begin to feel as though one of the witches had clapped her extinguisher over our spirits and choked out the last flickering flame, if we are wise, we summon our favourite enchanter and wait for the magic.

During the World War a youngish middle-aged man tried to persuade the examining surgeon that he was quite as fit for service as any lad, but the old doctor smiled benignly over his specs and said, "Well, you'd better keep right on cheering up the home folks. Eat corn bread and cut down on sugar and buy Liberty bonds, and we'll feel you're doing your share."

That was a gloomy moment. Here were the Allies steadily retreating toward the sea, and he wasn't even given a chance to save them. The crowds pressing into the theatre checked him and he read the sign "Shoulder Arms. Charlie Chaplin." "Must be for me," said he, and followed the gray-haired, tired-eyed, middle-

aged ones who had stepped aside to get a lift of enchantment that would help them carry on for another day. Together they laughed for a couple of hours while Charlie, a magic army on two twinkling feet, raced the enemy to exhaustion. Wonderful Charlie who could wipe away the tears of grief-stricken people and make them forget for a time the weight on their hearts.

Some folk raise cool eyebrows at Charlie, at the man with the rabbits, at the circus, and at the funny person who makes faces and sings excruciatingly and tumbles admirably. "They're not artists, you know." No? Well, what of it? They're the magicians at whose touch we shed the tattered garments of the jaded spirit, step into the pumpkin gold coach, and ride gaily off to the ball. To be sure, we will have to scurry back at the stroke of the clock, but that's part of the fun, and we always bear away the secret token that identifies us with the prince.

Better admit that we love the whole process, coach and fairy vision and childish laughter and enchanting make believe. To do less is unfair

and scarce honest. We all hunger for the magic touch of beauty in our lives. We must have it or perish. To be sure beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and if Shaw's Methuselah charms you more than does Charlie's witchery, what's to hinder you enjoying Shaw? Or your neighbour Charlie?

Whether Aladdin rubs an ancient lamp, or godmother rises from the ashes, or the king bends from the throne to make the magic is all one. The soul knoweth its own enchanter and none shall say it nay. To the whole hilarious, hearty tribe, from goblin to king, greeting.

THE PRICE

ALL that we call our own has been bought with a price, and however we try to soften the fact to ease the hurt, the truth still holds—we got what we paid for. If it prove cheap and unworthy we know in our secret hearts that it is because we were unwilling to pay the cost of the finer, better thing. Life is fair. Her price is high and she never haggles. She offers men their hearts' desires and demands that they pay.

Winning a prize from life is much like gathering a crop from the garden. Unless we dig deep, putting our backs into the job, unless we feed the soul that is to nourish the crop, unless we sow and water and weed and cultivate and rise up early and stay out late to guard and protect what we planted, unless we ache with the labour of its growing, we shall never harvest the

crop of our dreams. We have not paid in full.

In down-town New York, where once Peter Stuyvesant's garden bloomed, now the home of close-housed immigrants, stands the quaint old church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, rose-coloured, with pointed windows and pointed steeple. It is the kind of church that playing children image with interlocked fingers as they chant "Here's the church and here's the steeple. Open the church door and see all the people," while the rose-coloured light of their fairy fingers filters down on the hidden worshippers.

In one corner of its garden, screened by tender young trees, and so close to the railings one can almost touch it with outstretched hand, sits Atillio Piccirilli's lovely statue of "The Pariah." It is the figure of a man bowed in sorrow and loneliness and longing, yet athrill with the strength and power of a noble soul. Cast out, rejected, he is still unconquered and unconquerable.

"Yes, I think it is good work—my best," said the artist simply. "I wanted it here among the

lonesome people. When it was put here I stole down to see it again and again. I stood with the others looking through the railings, and wondered if they felt as I felt and saw what I saw. Drawn to the lonely man by love and pity, they pressed closer and tossed pennies at his feet, and some of them let the tears roll down their cheeks unheeded. Then I knew that my work was well done. I had put my best into it and the best had come back to me."

"How long did it take you to make him?" asked a reverent student.

The artist's eyes were very kind and his voice full of compassion as he said, "Forty years of living, my son. Forty years of living and working and aching. After that, a little chiselling in the marble."

A lifetime of struggle and sorrow, hope and fear, must go into our efforts if we are to win the high prize we covet. Nothing comes out of nothing. The worth-while things never come easily. Once we realize that the loneliness and the pain and the seemingly senseless drudgery

of the day-by-day living is the price of growing our souls to where they will yield something fine in love and friendship and work—those greatly to be desired gifts—we will not grudge to pay the price.

We will spend ourselves royally, and life will repay us in riches of content and peace and high happiness.

CHUMMING

AS THE years pass, say to the number of forty, you are either growing up or growing old. It is purely a matter of choice, and lest, unwittingly, you are heading toward old age, you'd better make a test of it and go chumming with a boy.

You must select the right sort for the purpose, of course. My own choice is the spidery chap, uncertain of voice and grasshoppery as to legs and arms. I like him to have a splash of freckles across his nose, and the redder his thatch, the warmer grows my heart. I insist upon the freckles. They are essential, for they bespeak long hours in the open and hint of fishing, which proclaims the "time and the place and the loved one altogether."

Plumping down on a lad and asking him if he wouldn't like to go fishing up Rock River next week will but meet with a swift denial A

fishing chum is as shy as a trout, and curious, and very wary. Better wait until Saturday afternoon and then bring out your fishing tackle to the side porch and begin polishing up.

At the second sound of the spinning reel he'll appear around the edge of the lilac bush, eye cocked, nose twitching. Shake out the landing net and thump the creel vigorously and he has reached the bottom step, when it is safe to discover him.

"Hullo. Thought I'd look things over before starting off next week. Ought to get a few nibbles up Rocky, don't you think?"

"Hh-hmn."

"You fish?"

"Hh-hmn. Got a big one in Buck's Creek last spring. Three pounds."

"What'd you use?"

"Fly. Made it myself. Want to see it?" and he's off and back again like a sun-flash.

"That's the one, just a little faded, but the water'll make it look alive again. That's the rod I got him with."

Now's the time, and as you heft his rod and twirl the reel you ask casually, "How'd you like to come along next week and fish up Rocky?"

He's at the gate before he remembers to call back, "I got to ask. Wait for me." After that it's all getting ready.

Early in the morning when the first sleepy birds are calling and the first soft lights begin to glow along the horizon, he whistles for you at the gate, and away you go, loaded like pack mules and gayer than colts. He tries to match his prancing to your stride, and becomes more grasshoppery than ever.

Dancing along beside you, he unlocks doors closed in your memory and little happinesses steal out and trickle through your veins and carry away the years until your steady stride breaks into his joyful hop and your slow smiles break into chuckles to match his own.

All day he fishes the stream within shout of you, ready to come at a nod, breathless with eagerness as you land your catch, dejected and still as it splashes away. When the sun goes

down and the cool shadows lay cool fingers across the earth you turn toward camp, and no words are necessary between you. Old Charlie has the fire ready, and you eat everything, from the wood smoke to the best of the day's catch.

By and by, the stars come out, and with them a busy little breeze with frost in its breath, and you pull out the blankets and prepare for sleep, and the next thing you know, there is the grasshopper, dripping wet in the doorway, and calling, "What time's morning for you?"

"Grasshopper time," you tell him, but he doesn't understand and runs off laughing to stir up the fire. However, you do. You're growing up, not growing old. You can still keep step with the grasshopper.

I GO A-FISHING

FISHING is an art. Only the elect achieve it; only the true fisher knows the deep content, the solitary bliss of the artist. Lovingly he hangs over his battered tin boxes and his crumpled fly-books. With shining eyes he takes down his rod and hefts it. He gives the reel a twirl, and its skirl is music to his ears. He is off in the gray of morning.

All day he tramps the stream, feeling neither cold nor wet nor hunger, only a great joy in the skill of his hand, and the leap and the capture. Night overtakes him, and with a sigh of content he turns toward camp. A golden day in the life of the fisher is ended.

I too go a-fishing. There's a pleasant road winding through the little park near by that offers rare luck. Toward evening, when the sun lights it with red gold, and the purple shadows cast deep pools upon it, I set out to make

my catch. A fine spring evening lured me but lately.

Cannily I selected the bench at the dip of the road by the old elm tree. They all slow up there. I sat and fished—still and listening. There came a dull whir and a scraping and a toothy whistling. I was all alert. "A small boy! Hope I land him." He rounded the bend, stiffening backward to keep his balance. I smiled, and he clumped over.

"Just the road for rollers, isn't it?" I asked him.

"Great," he answered. "You skate?"

"I used to." He looked me over with grave attention, not without sympathy.

"Bet you could yet. You're not *too* old." And then, stricken with shyness, he darted away. But I had him.

"Not *too* old," is sweet comfort from ten to fifty.

I fished on patiently. Many passed, but they were not for me. I had neither fly nor hook nor line that could stay them. The shadow

pools had spread over the roadways, and the sky was a deep cool blue, pointed with stars. The red gold field of the sunset had narrowed to the band of cold yellow that is the last warning to stragglers. "One more," I prayed to the god of the fishers. "Just one more."

A patter of fast-coming feet, a murmur of lilting song, and a bowed old man with a humpy load on his shoulders stood beside me. The glow touched his face, and it shone like a burnished cameo—a sensitive face, fined down to the things of the spirit. As he rested his burden against the old elm tree, I heard it ring and quiver with music. "It's a harp," I cried.

He smiled and nodded. "Would you like to hear it?" And there in the deepening twilight the old master shared his gift with me, shared the light of his life with me, a stranger. Then he said good-bye and slipped away in the shadows.

Content with my catch, I turned toward home. A deep sense of peace was upon me. I was a fisher of men, and my luck had stayed by me.

THE LIGHTED CANDLE

THE Boy who lives in our house is very much like other boys save for one thing: he "has a way with him." He dubs his lessons, gets late-slips, make the swimming team, and receives the bare passing-mark that permits him to go from grade to grade.

Yet, from his grandmother who adores him, to the French teacher who flunks him, everybody is his friend. If there is a dog on the horizon, he finds his way to the Boy's side. The little Busters and Buddies swarm up his back and cling to his hands as he passes. The motorman makes a place for him and chats jovially all the way. Peanut John has a wider smile for him, and a fuller sack, than for any of the others. He is the poorest swimmer on the team, but they would never think of starting without him.

"He will never take a first, of course," smiled

his schoolmaster, "but he has a candle lighted in the soul of him that will draw the love of people to him; they will follow him; his light will lead them. Pray that he will win in the struggle to carry it."

I sighed as I thought of the long years of effort ahead of the Boy. Would he be able to hold out? A man has to endure so much, fight so hard, hide so much pain and discouragement if he is to carry the shining light in his soul. Then I remembered I had met and touched hands with many men and women who had kept their candles burning. Many times I had renewed my faith and warmed my heart in their steady glow.

There is a bookman who has travelled from city to city these thirty years, selling books. He believes that to be his life work, but we who buy his wares know better. It was not the books he sold us that made him a part of our lives; it was the rich essence of living that he brought to us who might otherwise have missed it.

And there is a little bent old man who flits

from office to office with a scarred leather bag. He sells rubber stamps. Once the bag was new, the business strong, and a family flourished about him. But that was long ago. Now we know that the thirty cents for the little stamp and the sixty cents for the bigger one will carry him for to-day, and that to-morrow he will flit to another office, deliver another stamp or two, collect his few pennies and another day's living.

Still, he's the richest man in town. He owns all of us. For none other are the smiles so hearty; toward none other are so many welcoming hands outstretched. Sorrow has grayed his head, but his unfailing faith in the ultimate rightness of things has kept his candle burning until, to us, he has become a very acolyte.

You who go up and down selling books and needles and shoes and strange machines and sweets and toys, you who serve the needs of men —you carry a bigger, richer "line," which we who wait your coming could ill afford to miss. We look for it first. If it is there, shining

through the soul of you, greeting us in your smile, the tone of your voice, the grasp of your hand, it swings wide the door of our hearts, lights up the innermost crannies, and you enter to stay as long as your candle burns.

THE LONESOME PLACE

IN A bend of the trail lies the Lonesome Place. The woods creep down on both sides and hem it close in. Tall trees lock arms and form dusky arches, and the dim light filters through to make deep, mysterious shadows —formless, uncertain.

It is still, so still. No bird twitters; no breeze ruffles the becalmed air; neither roaming bee nor wandering butterfly strays here. It is still. A leaf lets go and flutters to the damp ground. Fear rides your shoulder. You would turn and flee; but your feet are set on the road, and there is no turning back. You must go on—and alone. It is single file in the Lonesome Place.

"You have been very brave," said a comforting friend to a bereft mother. "How did you ever stand it? I can't see how you faced it and lived."

"I didn't bear it," said she simply. "It was too big. Something that was not I slipped into my place, and somehow I got through. I found a strength that I never knew, and courage and faith too. I think they were waiting all the time—just waiting to be called on."

A man who had worked more hours than should content any man, and carried heavier loads than any man ought, eventually found himself lying on a hospital cot listening to the clipped tones of his friend the surgeon.

"I can do this job. I can cut out the trouble and patch you up as good as new. I can do my part and the nurses can do theirs. What I want to know is, can you do yours? Got anything to fall back on? Anything to call on in emergency?

"There'll come an hour when I'll have to stand back, when we'll all have to stand back, and you'll have to come through on your own. Got anything that'll help you through a place like that?"

The sick man smiled. "I understand. Yes, I've lived outside my body before. I can hold on and come through. Go ahead." . . .

Hold your stride and keep on. There is one with you, although you feel so alone. You scarce know him, because out there you were so busy making him. Here in the silence and loneliness, he rises to meet you.

The patience you learned by waiting on life, whose measured progress you could neither hurry nor hinder, is in his face, and it is as the patient power of the waiting sea.

Endurance that you wrested from the hours of grilling labour nerve him now, and his strength is the sure might of the mountains.

Righteous anger that bit into your dull flesh and burned down the barricade of selfishness flames in defiance from out his burning eyes.

The will that strove and would not be at rest rides him now like a god of the whirlwind.

You are not alone. You are with your Self, that elemental being of sea and mountain and

tempest and fire. The spirit of man is bearing you up and carrying you on. You have passed the Lonesome Place for ever. You have found your Self.

THE PLEASANT ROAD

IF WE knew exactly what was going to happen from day to day, there would not be much relish in living. It is the sudden bends and turns, the hills and the dips, the surprises along the way, that make life a thrilling adventure.

The boy meets his first sweetheart, and the whole scene changes. The world is full of the singing of birds and the hues of gay flowers. His feet scarce touch the road that seems so lovely, so direct to Heaven.

All too soon for him comes the mysterious bend in the road. The sweetheart vanishes. But smiles chase the tears. Rainbows are for ever fringing the lashes of youth. Hope is for ever whispering, beckoning around the turn in the road.

Dreams throng his mind, and he rests by the

way to con them—dreams of great things to do by and by, the people who will be so astonished, a hint of the discomfiture of those who think slightingly of him. He will show them all what a real man can do.

Duty stirs him with prodding finger. "Come—step along! You've a journey ahead of you, and your pack is ready. See, it's nicely balanced, if you'll keep an eye on it. This end resting on your shoulders carries experience, and this on your chest is carrying responsibilities. If you carry too many experiences, you'll fall backward; and if you have too many responsibilities, you'll fall on your face. Step along now, and keep your balance."

So off he starts with his double-ended pack, for all the world like the old orange and lemon man who travels from door to door seeking to gain his daily bread. The command has a most uncompromising sound, and if it were not that work comes along to take his mind off his pack, the journey that started so blithely would be dreary enough.

But work slips into his hands and fills them full and keeps them lively. The better the work is done, the deeper the hold it takes, until hands and mind and spirit are blended, and the man and his work are one. After that, he can never be wholly alone, never wholly downcast, never lost.

Work has this strange quality: as it dwells with a man, it changes from a mere doing to a feeling of power, a spiritual force that filters through every fibre, making him a happier, better creature. By this power alone a man is able to keep the pack on his back from felling him.

To be sure, there comes the sudden dip in the road. The friend who has travelled so long by his side waves his hand in farewell and turns off. There is no cause for stopping in grief. The whole long road is a series of good-bye's and to-morrow's. The tear-blinded vision will clear. There comes a surprising discovery. The friend that went on has in some strange way opened a path toward heights undreamed of in the old days. "I felt that I could not go any

farther. There was nothing left to go on for. Then the way opened, and here I am better than ever."

Dreaming again, as in boyhood! The old pack has changed into something rich and fine that buoys him up and wafts him along above the roughness of the road, above its dust and turmoil on toward that last bend which he will turn high-spiritedly, still adventuring. For the soul of man is a winged thing, and life follows the pleasant road.

THE BITTER END

WHEN I was a little lad I liked peanuts. Through the week I looked forward to Saturday when the penny, promised for five days of righteousness, would bring me a sackful of satisfaction and joy.

Eyes big, mouth wide with desire, I stood before Peanut John and begged, "A full sack, John. Big ones, please," and John, smiling at my childish greed, would untwist the ears of the little paper sack and add two, three plump nuts to its already overflowing load.

Gluttonously I munched my way to the bottom of the bag where there were always a few misshapen, blackened wisps of things that I should have tossed away. But I didn't. I ate them down to the last bitter crumb. And the suave flavour, the long-stored delight of my feast, vanished. All that remained was the bitter burning in my parched mouth.

Yet I persisted in emptying the sack each time. The waste was always there, and always I ate it until the day came when I had no more pleasure in peanuts; when the hissing oven and the fragrance of the little sacks with the twisted ears was no more than a sore memory and a warning.

I wonder why we do that? Why are we not content to take the gifts of life, scooping them up with a wide free hand, instead of scraping the bottom to its bitterness? Friendship comes to us, and for a time we are warmed and comforted. But soon we begin dredging. We question motives and challenge affection until the fine flavour of friendship turns to ashes in our mouths.

We drain joy to its dregs. We long to know, and feel, and exult, to the last heart throb. And then comes the desolation of satiety. Beauty probed to the depths becomes sinister. Life drained to its last drop turns to tragedy.

A certain incompleteness belongs to the life of man. We are unfinished beings in an uncom-

pleted universe. The stars are not finished, the mountains are not settled, nor are the waters fixed in their boundaries. Nothing is truly completed in this world.

There is no last word. If we try to pronounce one it turns to bitterness on our tongues. There is no finality. If we try to halt and say, "Here I stay, fixed, finished, complete," we taste the bitterness of death. For us there is neither complete happiness nor pure sorrow. It was never intended that we plumb either to the depths.

It were better to touch life lightly, with gentle hand. The task of completion is not ours. The fine flavour of life is found in its full flow, just beneath the foam. The wise man takes it with a wide gesture and in temperate mood.

For with age and experience comes knowledge, that bittersweet fruit of the tree of life. We know how to taste it sparingly and to pass on with its full savour in our mouths. Not as children we go, but as men, with the abstinence of wisdom.

THE SAME—AND DIFFERENT

MICHAEL was a wee misshapen man who handed us our papers every morning as we reached the station platform. He never mistook a *Times* for a *World,* never missed a service. More than that. My paper was folded with the editorial sheet out and creased so that with a turn of the wrist I could turn from it to my favourite columnist. The judge's sheet was open at the market lists and the gay young broker always found his open and creased at the sporting sheet.

Once a month we paid Michael, and he thanked us cheerily and tied the pennies up tight in an old blackened glove. "Saving up, Mike?" "Yep. Saving up for Christmas." That was our stock joke, and it served all of us faithfully. On the morning of Christmas Eve, Michael would hand each of us a little scarlet

cornucopia filled with tiny smooth red candies that nipped the tongue with a rare and Christmassy flavour. The car had a delightfully "remembering" odour that morning—it was childhood's sweets old Michael had provided—and a sweet and gracious peace reigned as we read our papers and chewed our fragrant sweets.

Then something happened to Michael one morning, and we heard with a catch in our breath that he would never hand us our papers again. "Oh, well," said the young broker, struggling to be gay in the face of something that threatened him—as is the way of all gallant young things—"nobody's indispensable. Somebody else will do the job. Things will go on just the same."

But they didn't. We got our papers, of course, but every now and then I got the *Times* and thrashed through it trying to find my editorial and the columnist, while the judge got the *World* and snorted with indignation—as though it were my fault. Then we remembered old Michael.

Christmas Eve came, and it was awful. The hustling young man at the stand thought to go Michael one better, so he gave each of his customers a paper bag containing a brilliant postcard's Merry Christmas and a pack of cigarettes. I don't smoke them, and the judge makes the lighting of his cigar a thing of ritual, and the young broker walks a mile for the right sort. And anyway, what did it all have to do with a gay little cornucopia, symbol of Fortune's horn of plenty, filled with the sweets loved of childhood, and old Michael's twisted smile?

The judge muttered something under his moustache and crumpled the thing under his foot; mine went out of the window, and the gay young broker twisted his to shreds as he looked from one to the other of us and said in contrition, "Well, it's the same only different. Michael isn't here, and it's different."

Of course it was different. Michael had a niche in our lives that no other could fill. And you and I have a niche in this world that no one else can fill quite as we do. That is why we

put our best effort into it, whether we are paid or not, whether we are thanked or not. All that makes no difference. We are here for some good purpose, and once we find what that is, we have the thrill of immortality within us.

Call this religion, call it superstition, what you will. I believe each of us is here for some good reason. One comes as the lonely consecrated leader of a great cause to be burnt as a sacrifice as were Lincoln and Wilson. Some, like Michael, come to fold papers and bring peace to burdened hearts. All of us are filling in the between places, the beginnings and endings of things important to the great plan. Few of us will leave an empty space against the sky, but each of us will leave a niche never to be filled quite as we filled it. Which makes the slightest service honourable and the meanest duty great.

THE LAW

THIS is a lament and a beseechment. I am troubled by the thought of those who want to do something about everything. I am worried by their insistent desire to "make a law." If we continue to pass laws in the vain attempt to level the life of a people to the same plane, the oldest inhabitant will soon lose his way in this erstwhile familiar, rut-worn world.

"The girls' dresses are altogether too short, too wispy, too daring. Something ought to be done about it. Let's write to the papers. Let's form a society and denounce the flippancy, the freakishness, the folly of this generation. Let's pass a law. Let's do something about it."

As if the girls' dresses had not, from the beginning of time, been the inspiration of poets, a lure for lovers, a thrill for artists, and the know-

ing delight of the girls. Naturally, they are as lovely, as gay, as attractive as the combined wisdom of the race can concoct. It is not the girls who make their dresses, you remember. Time and men's memories and dreams do that. What sort of law probes those depths?

"The boys are going too fast. Scarce out of their knickers, they crowd their elders from their seats. They go up and down the earth in speeding cars and ships. There is no place, no secret, hidden from them. There ought to be a law to keep them in their places. This aggression of youth must stop somewhere."

What sense in that? Youth rushes the world forward. Youth dares and does while age and experience sit back cautiously weighing reasons and consequences, doing nothing save passing a law against doing something. Life stops for no law of man. Strange the centuries have not taught him that.

"Reading too. These youngsters have read books their fathers never indicated they had heard of until they were certified and sanctified

elders. Nowadays the children read everything, know everything, have an opinion about everything. They discuss anything any time, any place. Something ought to be done about it."

"They dance too much. And such dancing. Truly awful, we ought to see about it. It must be the music. That tum, tum, tum thing gets you going and the first thing you know you are keeping time and listening for its weird noises. It is haunting and reminiscent of something, you can't tell what. But it gets you. There ought to be stricter laws about dancing and all that."

The talk and the spirit of it troubles me. You cannot legislate goodness, and there is no need if you could. Righteousness precedes the law. Goodness was inspired so long ago and so perfectly that all we of earth need do is seek and follow it.

Which is saying that most laws are unnecessary. Is that not true to you? Did you ever know any one succeed in making a silk purse of anything save the silk originally intended for

the purpose? Ever grow grapes on thistles? Ever force love?

The laws that will abide were fashioned when the foundations of the sea were laid. They are so perfect and so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein. Let us alone.

TOO TIGHT

IT IS a great misfortune to be a tight-minded person. If a man is ill there is always the hope that he will be better in the morning; if he is poor, there is always the chance that fortune may knock at his door to-day; if he is lonely, there is always the possibility that love will stop and look in at the window; if he is grieving, there is always the echo of a friendly foot hastening to him from around the corner. But if he be tight-minded, there is no chance in this world for his happiness.

I think of that every time I see Old Mullins go by in his racketing spring wagon, each wheel doing its best to discredit its neighbour, every spoke speaking for itself and complaining. No human being was ever so tight, and none so forsaken.

Mullins is not his name. He takes it from

his estate which bears naught but the ghostly mullein stalks that squeeze themselves upright between the stones of the pasture; a pasture so mean and so scraggy that the sheep scour their very noses trying to nip the close crouching grass that struggles to cover its nakedness. Tight, tight, the man speaks through his works.

No child smiles at his approach; none begs a hitch; none extends an expectant hand for a penny for the monkey or the peanut man. No friendly elbows rest upon his old rail fence; no stranger knocks at the weather-beaten door. There is no path to that door guarded to its very threshold by parched gray mulleins.

It is a droll trick of life that her delightful spirits may be closed out but never in. They may be charmed and beguiled into entering a door set ever so slightly at the crack, but they cannot be kept in the tight-closed dungeon of the closed mind. They love the open way, the clear road, the hospitable gesture. Close the door upon your treasure of love and fortune, it leaks through and is gone. If you would keep

and increase them, share generously. Bless your one loaf and pass it out to the multitude, and it will feed them and return you seven basketfuls. Hoard and guard it, and it will shrivel down to a mildewed crust.

There are minds that have not opened to welcome a new idea, to entertain a strange request, to receive a tonic surprise, since the days of childhood. Tight closed against the current of life beating against their doors, they share nothing, have nothing, amount to nothing. Too tightly clamped shut to the entrance of life in its abundance, they have lost the little they had and stand alone, aloof, repellent to all who love people and their ways.

Better the open mind that welcomes whatever comes, graciously entertains what stays, blesses what departs, and takes from each the gift it brings. No angel, then, will knock and turn away, and there will always be the opportunity to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

HIGH NOON

ONCE in each day comes high noon. The clock strikes twelve, and there is shadow neither before nor behind. Noon triumphantly salutes the sun, and the climax of the day is marked on the scroll of time for all eternity.

Life, if we would but sense it, is sane and serene, a graceful, lively episode. But to know its deepest delights we must discover our own rhythm and match it to our day. Most of us stumble along after the clock, lamenting the swift flight of time, when the truth is we have misplaced our own peculiar noon in the mad pursuit of a pair of hands folded against the hands of the clock. There is in the day one hour when each of us can stretch to his full height and mark high noon. But each must strike the magic hour for himself.

For we are all different, even in the rhythm of our days. If you happen to be one of the people who are not fit to be spoken to before ten o'clock in the morning and are going strong by ten at night when the rest of the family are ready for bed, accept it. Instead of fighting yourself for a lifetime, fall into your own rhythm, set your day to the time of your mind and body, and forget the hours of the sun. It were better to be a nightwatchman and brood over the stars in blithe beatitude than to be a milkman and curse the day you were born.

Even the place and the setting are important to those who would mark high noon. Mark Twain wrote best in bed, and the tobacco had to be just right before the pen ran smoothly. Thoreau went to Walden Pond to think. Bunyan did his best work in jail, and although he did not select the place and its setting, it must have been quite right for his purpose. Samson found his strength in his long hair, and Thackeray twisted a button on his coat before his power flowed over the dam. Good Queen Vic-

toria ate caraway seeds, and many a fine American citizen chews gum in the enriching hours of meditation.

Queer little twists and quirks go into the making of an individual. To suppress them all and follow clock and calendar and creed until the individual is lost in the neutral gray of the host is to be less than true to our inheritance. If you feel that a red flower sets your soul aprancing, pin it in your hair or in your buttonhole, and according to your kind be it unto you. The thought that your neighbour and dearest friend shudders at the mere suggestion of red need not deter you. He, no doubt, is red-haired and has an appetite for green. Give him his own and go on your way gorgeously.

But go gorgeously. We are a drab lot, tied to our clocks and our established customs. Life, the gorgeous quality of life, is not accomplished by following another man's rules. It is true we have the same hungers and the same thirsts, but they are for different things and in different ways and in different seasons. If you love to

sing, then sing. If you work best at midnight, work then. When you hunger, eat what tastes best, and when you are thirsty, drink. Find your own rhythm and strike your own hour. You cannot go wrong while you aim to stretch to your full height and register your high noon. Lay down your own day, follow it to its noon, your own noon, or you will sit in the outer hall listening to the chimes, but never reaching quite high enough to strike your own.

THE LITTLE FOXES

MANKIND fondly imagines that life would be happier if it were not for the little foxes that spoil the grapes. The little things that pester us into a tearing, stamping, roaring rage. That taunt us into declaring that Never, Never, Never, By the Great Horn Spoon, Never!

It isn't so. Tear our pet grievances from us and we would be dolefully lonesome and drooping and old. Nothing puts more snap and ginger into us than a fine healthy grievance that goes to bed with us in the evening and rises bright and shining in the morning.

It furnishes us with an interest in life; keeps us stepping right up with the procession, alert and alive to every chance. That we are wholly aware of our hidden grin, and that we know ourselves to be profoundly unreasonable, but add a

finer edge to our enjoyment and a drop of acid sweetness to the spirit of the fray.

Old Man Colby is a thoroughly respectable citizen besides being the village carpenter, but Mary cannot abide him. "No; if there's nobody else to hang that door it can stay down. Never mind why. I can't stand his smelly old pipe; I loathe the way he says, 'Well, now, is this you? Is this you now?' Who does he suppose it is? I just hate his old whiskers," and she sets the rocking chair going so madly that the house cat flees to the cold porch steps.

My beloved neighbour nearly quarrelled with me because I made the mistake of thinking he was actually annoyed when he was only petting his little fox. "I can't stand that poplar tree whispering in the wind all night. Why did the miserable thing go and grow itself right under my ear and whistle and rustle and tussle the long night through?"

"Why don't you cut it down?" said I, and with that he flew into a fury.

"Aren't you handy with the ax? Know how

long it takes to grow a tree like that? That's no common poplar tree. Cut it down just because it talks when I wish it would be quiet. Lots of things around here talk when I wish they'd keep still, but I don't go after them with an ax."

I should have known that he was but enjoying a good healthy grumble and getting pleasure out of it exactly as Uncle Charlie does with the sign-posters and his old barn.

The barn stands broadside to the junction of five roads, and the advertising men have their eyes on it. So has Uncle Charlie. Let one stop within hailing distance, and he is after him, hatchet in hand, and great is his joy if he captures the sign for the evening fire.

"Villains! Vagabonds! Vandals! I'll teach them." Clink, goes the armful into the kindling box, and he hitches his chair close to the steps, polishes his long distance glasses, and watches eagerly down the road.

We're like that. It's one way of having fun with ourselves. Should Mary cease to storm about Old Man Colby and Uncle Charlie sit

inert while some pert youth nailed a screamer on his barn, we would feel greatly disturbed, for nothing but grief has the power to wipe out our enjoyment of life's little nibbling foxes.

Perhaps it is a foreknowledge of this that keeps us at the skirmish.

ME

THE pipe leaked and a stream of water wandered down the hall precisely where it would do the most harm. In haste and alarm we called for the plumber, and he came. He had such gusto for his job, that plumber lad. He hammered and soldered and smoothed with the delicate accurate touch of a surgeon, and when he had done he bestrode his work and cocked a knowing eye at the head of the house: "You must be some particular about your jobs. When you called they sent ME." Louis Fourteenth could not have put more self-appreciation into that ME.

Why not? The notion that art and beauty are qualities that dwell in a realm where Saturday night may never intrude, is, to my way of thinking, quite wrong. There can be, and often

is, as much of art in wiping a joint or closing a deal as the artist puts into his picture or his statue. What can a man give beyond the best that his spirit yields? And is that not art? Truly the spirit of men is lovely in expression.

Every time you go down street you elbow greater beauty and more of it than you will find in a weary afternoon in the museum. The colours on the fruit stand fill your heart with delight. The shop windows are hoards of beauty. The lines on the motor cars melt into your beauty-hungry eyes, and the easy swinging grace of them as they glide is art in motion. Only the sea gull winging down to the bosom of the sea moves with a fairer grace, and God made that.

We stood in great crowds one velvety, moon-struck night, to watch the *Shenandoah,* an exquisite thing in melting silver light, dip and soar and poise again in the pulsing air, each line of her a haunting rhythm, the completeness of her a tremendous sonnet in praise of skillful men.

On clear evenings, as the Staten Island ferry-boat wallows across the bay, a little group of people gather on her deck, eyes fixed ahead, drinking in the beauty of the waterside, the loveliness of the towers and spires and noble walls of the city's skyscrapers. Bathed in light that ripples and darts from sea to sky they stand, the symbol of Monday morning and Saturday night, a glimpse of the spirit of toiling men and women who write ME on the daily job.

We greatly honour those who create beauty in the studio. Why not those who create it red hot in the shop or the office, all in the work of the day? The ironworker setting his girder, the reporter writing his story between leaps, the house-mother laying her table, all of us who work have a share in the prideful ME.

There is no fun in working if there is no room for the signature of the worker. We crave this one thing of life; that we may make our peculiar mark upon it. We hope that in days to come someone will stop long enough to

say, "See, he did this perfect thing. Here is his ME upon it."

By right of authority we possess it, for the Creator stood back from his labour and pronounced it very good.

TO-DAY'S BEAUTY

MY CONTRACTOR friend walked down street with me, complaining as he went. "This is an awful age. America is raw at the edges, all the seams show. Machines and machines and machines and noise and crudity. I'm off for the Old World to-morrow."

We stopped to watch one of his machines at work and, fascinated by its beauty, I scarce heard him. A tumbledown house was to make way for a new one, and this monster of steel and iron and power was taking the foundations away. A sharp whistle, a mighty sigh and a long arm swung out to let a pair of giant hands clutch and carry a cubic yard or so of bricks and mortar to the waiting truck. Again and again the great hands clutched, and like magic the foundations disappeared and the trenches for the new ones were laid.

"My, that's beautiful," said I, thrilled to the core by the grace of the silent monster.

"Beautiful! That's a machine, man. Just a machine. Beautiful! Beauty is a thing of the spirit, an inspiration of the soul. How do you find it in a mass of iron and steel? Think of the Pantheon and the Venus and Michael Angelo and, and——" He grew incoherent in his intensity.

I did. I think of them often as I see the motor cars glide by and notice their lovely lines, their easy grace, their nonchalant speed. There is art in nonchalance. When one is care-free and at ease one does his highest best and the perfectly working machine speaks of the artist behind its perfection. Beauty comes after pain departs, and art gives birth to perfect work in the period after stress. In fact, there is no evident effort, only power and a haunting beauty, the memory of something that stooped and passed like an angel vision.

Last week there came a strange sound from the sky and, looking up, I saw a thing of fire, a

great birdlike, flaming airplane astride the stars. Higher and higher it rose, piercing the sky, and suddenly pivoting on a speck of light, it twirled and shot downward toward the roofs of the city, tumbling like a joyous pigeon from some mystic land, then heading again for the stars across the face of the blinking moon.

With the little shower of appreciation came the thought that the heart of the whole matter lay in the spirit of the tiny man at the control, that the sheer beauty of it came directly from the engineer who created it. Even the great Michael Angelo would not have disdained that flowing line and gracious mass and throbbing power.

The country-bred lad turns his back on the hills and the old maples and searches for beauty in the stone-paved town. The restless, rebellious child of the town longs to go out to meet the noble people who live beyond the horizon, turning their backs on the finest, the most beautiful people they will ever meet, father and mother whose lives are psalms of loveliness. Older

folk who should know better cross worlds to find the beauty that is pressing its face against their very windowpanes.

Beauty, to be sure, is in the eye of the beholder, your own eye and not another's. It brims over in the common things about us, in the face of a happy child, in the flowing lines of the cars and planes and ships, in the wares on Joe's fruit stand. All one needs is the eye.

THE WHITE BIRCH TREE

THE white birch tree is a lovely thing. Its white bark makes it stand out like an exclamation of clear, clean delight against the background of the brown and green of the woods. Daintily it seems to step along the edge of the water like a lovely frightened girl who longs for a glimpse of her own loveliness reflected in the quivering water.

Dressed in the silky green of the springtime, there is none so lovely. The delicate branches sway in every light breeze and the fragile branchlets wave like the tresses of some wandering woods fairy. Sunlight dances along the shaft of white and turns it into shimmering silver, and lends a sheen of rare beauty to the exquisite crown. There is nothing so lovely as a white birch tree.

Back in the mountains, on the face of a slope

that slides down to the lake, there is a cathedral of birch trees. For half a mile long and another deep, they raise their white columns to the sky. Branch meets branch and forms high arches through which the faint light of the far-off sky dribbles, making a floor pattern beyond the skill of the noblest artist of them all. There is nothing so majestic as a setting of white birch trees.

Beautiful by day, aquiver in the silvery sunshine, they are beautiful unto tears in the light of the moon and the stars. Whispering of things that ache in the hearts of men, they raise their graceful arms toward the deep blue and carry them up and away. There is nothing in the woods so inspiring as the white birch trees.

For years it has raised its arms in praise to the Creator; for years it has given shade to the earth and shelter to the birds and tiny creatures of the forest. For years it has withstood the frosts and storms and winds and suns that it might bless you in its loveliness. And in a moment you kill it.

For the white birch tree wears its heart close to its delicate silken skin. Many of the loveliest things of creation do that. The fairer they are, the easier it is to slay them.

When you take a knife and cut into the bark of the white birch tree, you cut into its heart and spill its very life blood. You kill the beautiful defenceless tree that asked only to be allowed to gladden you with its presence. And for what? What could you make from a bit of birch bark taken from over the heart of a white birch tree that would bear comparison with that tree in its beauty?

You would not do this knowingly. Now you know. Will you join my order of the white birch tree? You will never have to wear any uniform or pay any dues or take any pledges. All you will have to do is to salute each white birch tree that you pass and leave it there to work its lovely will for the good of men.

WINDOW SHOPPING

IT IS great fun to go window shopping along the streets of the booksellers. There are books with beautiful bindings and books with plain board backs and books with movie-picture jackets and books carefully dressed in such good taste that all you remember about them is that you were happy to meet them and made an appointment with them for some day when you had the price.

Then there are the second-hand books that surprise you into wondering how any one could have bought them first hand. Maybe they were always like that though, born second hand? You know all the time that their aristocratic relations, first editions of old masters, are in seclusion on the shop shelves safe from the stares of the covetous. I was flattening my nose against the window to catch a glimpse of them when I became aware of the boy.

He was about fifteen. It was Saturday, and he had a job. The packages he was to deliver were under his arm. He had a bright clean face with a wind-blow of freckles across it. His tan-coloured flannel shirt had been clean not so long since, and I knew that to-night he would have a bath and that his clean clothes would be laid out ready for early church. He looked like that.

He studied the books with calculating and appraising eye. An experienced window shopper. I felt the glow of fellowship, but shyness held my tongue. Together we looked at a stack of Oscar Wilde done in red leather. Leisurely, we took in the good points of a pocket edition of Kipling. With a casual eye we read over the titles of the best sellers spread out in open fan order. We were unmoved and sidled along to the next window.

That WAS a window. They were beauties. "Robinson Crusoe" done in a blue binding that said as plain as day, "*This* is 'where the blue begins.'" "The Last of the Mohicans" wearing

a jacket that would coax a boy from his dinner. A glorified "Kidnapped" and a "Treasure Island" open at the picture of the awful blind man tapping his way down the road to the inn. That was a picture to pull you through the glass. A "Huckleberry Finn" and an Abraham Lincoln picture bearing a legend that said something about building character finished the far corner.

We surveyed the array and sighed. "Look good?" I ventured.

"Yes," he said, with the brief directness of sincerity.

"Which is yours?"

"This," said he, tapping the glass with his toe and hitching the packages more securely under his arms. 'Twas the best boy's book in the lot. The very one that I love best. We beamed and nodded like a pair of mandarins. Then he remembered his errands and I mine, and we set about our business, "blithely" as Stevenson would have us do.

All the way home I thought of the boy and

wondered who it was who loved him well enough and regarded the masters truly enough to make them friends. His mother? His teacher? The librarian? Someone was building a fine boy. Fortunate lad. Happy somebody.

MY CABBAGES

I DO like to raise cabbages. *Raise* them, remember. Anybody who cares to do so may eat them.

I like to make the puddly holes for the plants. I like to guard them from the heat of the sun until each stands up bravely and shows a stockade of sturdy blue-green leaves that, edging shoulder to shoulder, screens the tender, crumpled wee hearts within it.

I am even willing to rise early in the morning so that I can delight in the dewdrops that glisten on the dry leaves. It's fun to shake a leaf and watch the drops run into the heart below.

Daily I watch for the white butterflies that betoken danger. I see them dancing high in the sunlight above my cabbages. Higher and higher they dance. Ah, well I know. Soon

they will descend upon my helpless innocents and then—— Early each morning I bend over them and search for the babies. I never get them all, though I scrutinize leaf after leaf for the velvety children of the dancing butterflies.

I cultivate and water and feed those cabbages, looking forward to the day when they will present a firm, clean, delicately green head to an admiring family and to whatever friends I can entice into the garden patch.

The row of Wakefields had just reached perfection. They sat in a long row like green thrones waiting for the fairy queen and her attendant maidens. I wasn't the only one that thought so, though.

In the evening, when I went down for a parting look, I found Mike, my neighbour's dog, trying to sit on one. Each time he made the effort he slid off and dug things up considerably. Nothing daunted, he tried again and again.

"Out," I shouted. "Out. Away with you! You rascal! Scamper!"

I stamped and gestured violently. The Airedale pup merely glanced my way and tried again to sit upon a fine broad cabbage. Again he slid off. I reached him, caught him by the scruff of the neck and spanked him with my free hand. He howled. How he howled! The indignity of it made his soul bitter and his thirst for revenge sharp. Loudly he yowled for help.

The echoes reached Peaked Hill and came back frightfully. His little mistress came running. Mike went running. They embraced at the gate and went off down the road together.

Early the next morning I heard murmurings in the cabbage patch. I peeked about the little balsam that cuts off the view of the path. Midge sat on one cabbage and held Mike upright on another.

"There, my darling Mike. Sit on the green velvet opera chair and listen to C'ruso sing," said the little minx, with the coolest assurance. The most seasoned matron in the golden horseshoe could have done no better.

On the bough of the elm overhanging the gar-

den a song bird poured out his soul to an entranced audience of two.

Perhaps that's what the cabbages were for all the time and I hadn't found it out.

ROBINS AND RASPBERRIES

THE raspberry patch is on the slope that looks toward the lake. The sun shines there if it shines at all, and the little breezes play about in the swaying branches whenever they can escape to the earth for a lark.

It is always lovely out there. Before the leaves come out on the trees, you can look clear across the lake and count the tallest trees on Peaked Hill. The lake lies at your feet and stretches for miles and miles down to the Schroon Valley.

When the leaves come to curtain the forest you know it is because the birds want to build their nests. They would not think of building a nest in the open. There must be curtains. So out they come, a trifle crinkly, wrinkly from close packing, but sweet smelling and silky. The evergreens hang up the golden fringes for

a finish, and the woods are ready for housekeeping.

The raspberries decorate with crinkly red-brown rosettes and bouquets of white blossoms. Then is the time to stand on the edge of the raspberry patch and smell and look and listen.

Robins, great husky fellows with puffed-out chests and red vests, sit boldly on the sprays and chortle and whistle like the rollicking larrikins they are. They love the raspberry patch. Birds of good taste, for beside the raspberries there is the strawberry patch alongside. One can sway on a tipsy branch and take a glance at the strawberry prospects.

Summer speeds on and the berries keep time with the sun. They must hang out their dull red drops of sweetness before the August sun goes down or Jack of the Hills will be upon them and lay them low.

I watch them colour. I have an interest as deep as the robins'. A faint tint of rose in the evening, a soft red by morning. By the morrow

morning they will droop heavily on their stems, ready for the picking.

The cook, too, has been watching. "I thinks I'll have a raspberry shortcake for tea to-night. You-all better pick them this mo'nin'."

After breakfast I go to the patch with my berry pail. There is a glimpse of scarlet through the bushes. "Robins," I say to myself. "Just in time. The rascals nearly beat me out."

A small boy lives in our house. Three small boys live in the cottage at the foot of the hill. All wear red sweaters and none of them chortle or chirp.

"Some berries!" mutters a voice choked with sweetness.

"I'll tell the world!" replies the boy who lives in our house.

I retraced my way to the kitchen door and returned the pail. "No berries to-day, Rose. The birds got into the patch this morning."

"Drat the robins!" says Rose.

A PRIVATE VIEW

A MASTERPIECE is rarely come by and very precious. Even the knowledge of its existence brings a spiritual lift. I am inviting you to a private view of some that hang in my gallery.

At half after seven, Mary comes down the hill to meet the trolley car. The precise instant of her appearance on the brow of the hill is marked by the mad scurry of a liver-spotted dog to make the corner in time to meet her. Close behind him, but more decorously, as becomes her sex and dignity, follows a cat, purring like a well-warmed teakettle and arching her back until her toes spurn the walk.

Mary greets them with pats and kind words and tid-bits from her old black bag. Daintily each accepts her offering as though to say, "It is not for a bone we wait," and as Mary boards

the car the two sit on guard watching for the final flicker of the old black shawl. An old woman in wrinkled and faded black, a nondescript pup, and a cat, but the lighting in that picture comes from an old master.

At the farther end of my trip is Mac of the news-stand. He is so old he has forgotten the years. His eyes are dim; he hears if the wind is in the right direction and your lungs are in good working order. One leg is considerably shorter than the other, and most of the fingers are missing from his right hand. He wears a button in the lapel of his old blue coat—proudly fingers it now and then when he explains about his bad knee and those fingers. All day he listens to the stories of those who file past his stand, shares the hopes, the denunciations, the jokes they shout into his cupped ear.

The best view is that of him and Panitello as they bend over the dog book. Panitello is just eleven, the last of a brood of fourteen, so, of course, buying the magazine is out of the question. Mac puts a copy aside for him, and to-

gether they thresh out the burning question of puppy biscuit or settle the good points of the prize-winners. Fine composition that—and again the lighting is masterly. Such tenderness in the dim old eyes—such eager affection in the bright young ones. Great work.

Once a year there comes into my office a gracious presence—"A Lady of the Old School," a masterpiece in which light and shadow mingle and triumph as pure light. The pearls about her neck shimmer like those of Aladdin's treasure cave, but the glow in her eyes makes them seem dim reflections of some hidden shining.

"For some child that has a great need," she whispers. "It will come to him just when he needs it most, as though from Heaven. It would spoil it if he were to know," and she is gone as though wafted off on a chariot cloud.

My gallery is full to overflowing with the masterpieces of simple, loving, everyday people whose names will never appear on any scroll of earth. Long ago they learned the secret of mixing the harsh elements of life into something

rich and fine and spreading them in forms of touching beauty. Tears and smiles, the essence of joy and the distillations of grief are their mediums, and they use them with sure hands and high hearts.

LABELS

THIS is the day of the label. It is the most convenient short-cut. Saves no end of time and worry and thought. Every wideawake citizen has a pocketful of them and can pin them on at a moment's notice.

There's that uncomfortable citizen who keeps harping at us to do something about the schools. Keeps saying that the children of the people are not getting a real article when education is being served out. Wants us to reorganize the school and freshen the curriculum, make it a bit more modern and closer to the needs of the common people.

"Hm—'people,' 'modern,' 'common people' —got his number right away—rank socialist. Pinned his label to him right away, I did." And having labelled this disturber of our peace, we go on our way unheeding his protest that he

doesn't know a socialist when he meets him; that he is trying to do something for the "kids." He's through. We labelled him.

Along comes a woman with quiet manners and gracious dignity and begs us to look at the sort of literature we are feeding to our young people, asks us to glance over the library lists and add a few copies of Stevenson, Twain, Dickens, Emerson, and their kind to the stock of Elsie's, Rollo's, already on the shelves.

Long before she has finished her first sentence we have our label ready: "Highbrow! Spotted her a mile away. Horn specs. No style. Talks about the dead ones. Young folks have no use for that sort. Need an hour off when they read. Highbrow stuff drives them away."

And that settles that. The lady has been labelled and dismissed. The label is such a time-saver, such a shock-absorber. If we did not have it with us, we would certainly have to do some thinking and make some adjustments, and nothing so bores us, so wearies us, as that.

During the political campaign, the label is a

positive life-saver. When a man attempts to tell us that there is room for improvement in the halls of government, we rise right up and pin his label on him there and then. Why let him make a din in our ears? Label him, "Bolshevist," "job-hunter," "sorehead," according to the taste that day in labels, and cease to give him any further attention.

That we purchased our package of labels second hand, that we have no real knowledge of the meaning of the label or the contents of the package we have labelled, troubles us not at all. He would disturb us in the ordered routine of life, and we would defend our comfort against him. "Tag, you're IT," and he is shelved. Our ease of body and mind is secure. We sit back in comfort.

But somewhere a still small voice is whispering. Be not so rash. Mankind does not live by labels entirely. They never settled anything, though they started much. There were "Roundheads," "Abolitionists," and "Sufferin' Yets." There will be others. Throw away your labels.

Do a little brain sweating on your own account. The real difference between a man and an animal is that the man can reason and the animal cannot. Think! For your soul's sake, think!

THE END